

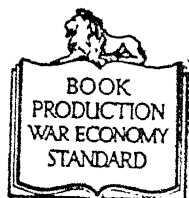
# *The Red Army*

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## WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT

IT TOOK THE GERMAN ARMY LESS THAN TWO YEARS—FROM SEPTEMBER, 1939, to June 22, 1941—to conquer eleven European countries. From the Russian frontier to the Atlantic, from Narvik to the English Channel and the Aegean, sprawled the tentacles of the Nazi octopus—symbol of death, barbarism, slavery and naked rapine. Hitler threatened to cast his noose around the whole world and to force the freedom-loving peoples of the U.S.S.R., of Great Britain, of all Europe and America to bow the knee before the fascist idol.

The rulers of many countries stood in fear and trembling of the might of the German army, and believed that it was invincible. That army subjugated one country after another, and it seemed that only a miracle could save the free nations from Nazi slavery. But if there are such things as miracles, a miracle took place in Russia. When, in June, 1941, he launched his treacherous attack on the Soviet Union, Hitler boasted that he would settle with the country of the Soviets in six weeks—two months at the most. And now, nearly four years later, Germany is at its last gasp.

The Red Army has foiled Hitler's plan to subjugate the Soviet Union and-foiled his schemes of world domination. It has hurled back the German army from the Volga and the Caucasus to the Oder and beyond. The German army, once the most powerful in the world and, as many thought, invincible, has been routed on the territory of the Soviet Union and inside Germany herself. The Red Army's outstanding successes have paved the way for the complete victory of the United Nations on all the fronts of the war.

How did this come about? How are we to explain the miracles performed by the Red Army?

This book is an attempt to answer these questions.

## *Chapter One*

### BIRTH AND CAREER OF AN ARMY

#### THE RED ARMY'S BIRTHDAY

ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 23, 1918, THE INHABITANTS OF PETROGRAD were roused by the warning shriek of sirens. Those were difficult days for the young Soviet Republic. Germany, reckoning on Russia's weakness, had conceived the idea of occupying her and converting her into a German colony. The Germans confidently believed that they could utilise Russia's vast natural resources to bring their war in the west to a victorious conclusion.

A state of siege was proclaimed in Petrograd. The Germans were already nearing Pskov. Petrograd made feverish preparations for defence. Roused by the alarm sirens, the city resembled a disturbed beehive. Everywhere, in factories and offices, fighting detachments were formed. Tens of thousands of men and women set out to build defences.

The Soviet government, headed by Lenin, proclaimed a state of emergency and appealed to the people and the Red Guards to defend every position to the last drop of blood. The Germans were totally unprepared for the fierce and stubborn resistance which the detachments of the Red Guard put up on February 23 and subsequent days. To their utter surprise, they were not only stopped at Pskov and Narva, but were completely routed.

This day—February 23, 1918—when the Germans met with their first resolute rebuff from the Red Guard, is regarded as the birthday of the Red Army.

The Red Guard was the most reliable armed support of the young Soviet Republic. Its worker detachments fought the numerous enemies of the new state. But their fighting career had begun even before Soviet rule was proclaimed, in the days of preparation for the October Revolution.

The Red Guards were recruited from the factories and mills. In the autumn of 1917 their numbers grew by leaps and bounds. In Petrograd enrolment was open only to workers, and only at their place of work. Outside volunteers were not accepted. This was a precautionary measure to prevent all kinds of adventurers from worming their way into the ranks of the Red Guard of the capital, which was under the direct control of the workers. In some of the shops of the Putilov works the Red Guards were elected at general meetings of workers, and proudly considered themselves representatives of their factory.

Lenin and Stalin interested themselves in every detail of the training and activities of the Red Guard detachments at a time when they were still only preparing them for the decisive October assault on the tsarist autocracy. Then one day the General Staff of the Red Guard received orders to mobilise all means of transport, to occupy all tactically important points in the city, to arrange for the protection of the mills and factories, and to detail fighting squads for the seizure of government buildings.

The armed revolt had begun.

Orders were given to storm the Winter Palace. Detachment after detachment set out for the square where stood the great dark hulk of the palace. As they marched, they sang revolutionary songs, and the stern words echoed through the broad avenues of the city. The workers' guard of the October Revolution was on the march. Filled with courage and resolution, it was the prototype of the Soviet Guard of the Great Patriotic War of our own day.

The demands made on the Red Guard were very exacting. The military manual of that period said: "Every combat operation demands of the Red Guard the strictest discipline on the one hand, and on the other the utmost activity and intelligent initiative on the part of both commanders and men for the earliest achievement of assigned objectives under all circumstances."

It was from the detachments of the Red Guard that on February 23, 1918, was formed the Red Army, which took up the fight against the invaders and the forces of internal counter-revolution.

The Red Army soon established contact with the numerous partisan detachments which had sprung up in the areas of the Soviet Union occupied by the Germans. It rapidly increased in numerical strength. When the Germans began to occupy the Ukraine, Ukrainians flocked to the ranks of the Red Army in large numbers. Led by Klimenty Voroshilov, Red Army battalions formed from workers of the Donbas fought the Germans stoutly at Konotop. Very soon these battalions, reinforced by partisans, grew to the dimensions of a regular army, which marched to Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) and took part in its defence. General Krasnov, a tool of the Germans, was trying to capture this fortress on the Volga because of its supreme strategical importance. The celebrated defence of Tsaritsyn in 1918, led by Joseph Stalin, constitutes one of the most heroic pages in the history of the Red Army. The plight of the defenders seemed hopeless, yet they held on to the Volga citadel and defeated the enemy.

Resistance to the German invaders assumed wide dimensions in the Ukraine, where the Germans were forced to maintain over half a million men, although the war in the west had reached its climax. In the end, the Germans were put to flight by the Red Army and the partisans.

But even after this the Red Army was compelled for over two years to wage a persistent struggle with its enemies under the most trying and distressful conditions. The country was severed from its grain regions—the Ukraine, the Kuban, Siberia and the Volga; and from its fuel and raw material regions—the Caucasus, the Donbas, the Urals and Central Asia. Bereft of fuel and raw materials, mills and factories came to a standstill. The railways had practically ceased to function. In the towns the bread ration of the workers was cut to 50 grammes (about 2 oz.) per day.

The Red Army, ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-shod and poorly armed, was beset by numerous well-armed enemies. Yet it withstood all these difficulties and hardships and vanquished its adversaries one after the other. And in the course of the struggle it became steeled and tempered, its commanders gained in skill and proficiency, and it built up an heroic fighting tradition.

### MIRACLES OF HEROISM

Created and fostered by Lenin and Stalin, the Red Army already in its earliest years produced a number of first-class commanders. Among them might be mentioned Frunze, Voroshilov, Budenny, Chapayev, Shchors and Parkhomenko, who became national heroes and covered themselves with undying glory. During the period of civil war and intervention the direct leadership of the Red Army on the most important, difficult and dangerous sectors was entrusted to Stalin. Sergo Orjonikidze, one of the heroes of those days, who later became a leader of Soviet industry, once said:

“When it was necessary to defend the country from Kolchak’s hordes in the east, Lenin sent Stalin, and Kolchak was smashed.

“When it was necessary to defend the Soviet state from Denikin in the south, Lenin sent Stalin, and Denikin was smashed.

“When it was necessary to smash Yudenich and save Leningrad, Lenin sent Stalin, and Yudenich was smashed.

“When it was necessary to smash Wrangel, Lenin sent Stalin, and the enemy was smashed and hurled into the Black Sea, thanks to the brilliant leadership of Comrade Stalin.”

The victories of the Red Army in those days were due to its high morale, its clear understanding of the aims of the struggle, its fiery patriotism—the patriotism of a true people’s army—and hence its conscious military discipline. Lenin said that this discipline was of unparalleled firmness because it was a discipline that was not enforced by the cudgel but was based upon the conscientiousness, devotion and self-sacrificing spirit of the workers and peasants.

The Red Army originated and grew up as an army representing the friendship which cements the peoples of the Soviet land. Even

in the days of the civil war, Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Georgians, Latvians, Kazakhs and other peoples fought side by side in its ranks.

The Red Army derived strength from its consciousness that it was fighting for noble aims of liberation. The people helped their army in every way they could, sparing neither means nor effort. Everywhere the Red Army had the support of partisan detachments. The home front strained every nerve to supply the army. The slogan of the day was: "Everything for the war! Everything for the front!" This mighty support of the people was an additional inspiration to the Red Army. And when in 1920 Poland treacherously attacked the Soviet Republic, the young Red Army was strong enough to administer a vigorous rebuff.

In November, 1920, the Red Army was ordered to liberate the Crimea and to demolish General Wrangel's counter-revolutionary army which had entrenched itself there. Unexpected frosts had set in. The Red Army men were still clad in summer uniforms which were worn and tattered at that. Yet they were called upon to break through the enemy's powerful fortifications on the Perekop Isthmus, which were considered impregnable. They performed their duty with credit. In bitter frost, and advancing over open ground in the face of hurricane fire, they stormed the isthmus and overcame all the enemy lines of fortification one after the other.

Meanwhile another group of Red Army men crossed the Sivash Gulf (Putrid Sea) and carried the fortifications of Chongar by storm. It was an epic feat. They crossed the Sivash when its bottom was exposed by an unusually heavy ebb. Behind them the returning sea advanced, threatening to engulf them. All around them shells were bursting. Ahead lay a chain of powerful fortifications. But morale, fortitude and supreme heroism told, and they performed the impossible.

When in March, 1921, the White Guards seized the fortress of Kronstadt, the gateway to Petrograd, Red Army men commanded by Voroshilov crossed the ice of the Gulf of Finland and carried this formidable stronghold by assault. They advanced in the face of devastating artillery and machine-gun fire, with the powerful fortress guns launching death into their midst. The ice cracked and collapsed beneath them. But the men leaped from ice-floe to ice-floe and pressed persistently forward. Nothing could stop them, and Kronstadt fell.

As late as December, 1922, the Red Army was still fighting to liberate the Far Eastern territories occupied by Japan. The most memorable of the engagements were the battles of Volochayevka and Spassk. The enemy had twice the numerical strength of the Red Army. He had immense stocks of victuals. His soldiers were splendidly clad, and they were, moreover, fighting on the defensive, in warm quarters. The Red Army men, on the other hand, were half-

starved; they had nothing to eat but frozen fish; they had to sleep out in the open in forty degrees of frost. But their spirit was dauntless. They advanced through deep snow to attack the fortifications of Volochayevka. Neither the enemy's murderous fire nor his barbed wire entanglements could stop them. The enemy was overwhelmed and Volochayevka fell. Its fall was followed by that of Spassk.

The heroism of these celebrated battles has been perpetuated in song and literature.

When the young Soviet Republic had at last vanquished all its numerous enemies and was able to pass to the work of peaceful construction, the Red Army was trained in the spirit of these heroic traditions.

Its function was to protect the peaceful labours of the Soviet people. Thanks to the success of Stalin's plan for the industrialisation of the country, the army was able to equip itself with modern weapons, so as to be prepared to repulse the attack of any new aggressor. It demonstrated its proficiency in modern warfare in 1938 and 1939 in the victories of Changkufeng and Nomonhan.

The Soviet Union continued its labours in peace until the summer of 1941, when once again mortal danger threatened it.

#### THE DUEL WITH NAZI GERMANY

On June 22, 1941, at Hitler's orders, the Nazi army suddenly and treacherously fell upon the Soviet Union.

The Germans were joined by the armies of Finland, Rumania, Hungary, Italy, Spain and other vassals of Hitler. The Red Army was thus forced to fight single-handed against the armed forces of the large coalition headed by Nazi Germany.

True, the Soviet Union had an ally right from the first. When Germany attacked the U.S.S.R., Mr. Churchill announced that Great Britain would support the Soviet Union by every means in her power. President Roosevelt also announced that the United States would give the Soviet Union every possible aid. This was the foundation of the anti-Hitler coalition, which developed into the mighty alliance of the United Nations, cemented by a common will to victory.

But at that time Great Britain herself was hard pressed. The wounds of Dunkirk had not yet healed, and the "Battle of Britain" was still raging. The Luftwaffe was making its barbaric terror raids upon British towns. Britain's armed forces were still in process of being built up. Only in Africa was the fight being carried on against Germany's ally—fascist Italy. On the continent of Europe the German armies were opposed by the Red Army, fighting alone.

The issue was joined in a gigantic battle along the entire Soviet-German front, from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea.



When Germany perfidiously attacked the Soviet Union, even sincere friends of the Red Army viewed the prospect of the struggle with apprehension and alarm. The world had been intimidated and dazzled by the German army's easy victories in Western Europe. The German war machine, its tanks and aircraft and motorised hordes, seemed to be a prodigious force, whose assault nothing in the world could stop.

Now the German panzer armies were speeding eastward, into the heart of the Soviet Union. They were accompanied and actively supported by the Luftwaffe. In their wake moved armies of motorised infantry.

At first, the course of the fighting shaped unfavourably for the Soviet Union. The Nazi command exploited to the full the advantages gained from the suddenness of their attack. The Red Army was not yet mobilised. The Germans succeeded in overwhelming the frontier units. However, right from the very first one significant and gratifying fact was to be observed: everywhere the enemy was meeting with resistance. Notwithstanding the numerical superiority of the Germans—especially in tanks and aircraft—the Soviet troops heroically gave battle to Hitler's panzer armies. In those days Soviet infantrymen often went out to meet the German tanks armed with nothing but a bundle of grenades, which they hurled beneath their tracks. They also set fire to tanks with bottles of inflammable liquid.

Typical of the mass heroism of the Red Army was the gallant fight put up by twenty-eight guardsmen against fifty tanks at the railway point of Dubosekovo, near Moscow. First this handful of men, who were ensconced in a small trench, repulsed the assault of twenty tanks, knocking out fourteen of them and losing half their own numbers in the process. Then a new wave of thirty panzers bore down upon them. The Soviet guardsmen set fire to ten of these. The unequal battle lasted several hours. The heroes laid down their lives, but they did not retire a single step. The words uttered by Klochkov, their commander, have become famous throughout the Soviet Union: "Friends," he said, "Russia is vast, but we have nowhere to retreat to. Moscow is at our backs."

Many a gallant man perished in those days. But so did the German panzers; so did Hitler's crack divisions. Right from the start the Red Army's artillerymen, in particular, proved their mettle and proficiency. Soviet shells turned out to be stronger than the German panzers.

The Red Army developed new tactics in the struggle. The Soviet troops at that time did not possess the fighting experience which the Wehrmacht had acquired in the two years of war in Western Europe. It looked as if nothing could stop the advancing masses of German panzers. But, cunningly as the German war machine was constructed,

it possessed one defect. Tanks could not advance alone. They needed the support of infantry, without which gains could not be consolidated. The panzers also depended on the services of the rear for their supply of fuel, ammunition and provisions. This weak link in the German mechanised armies was probed by Soviet tactics.

The Red Army was numerically inferior to its adversary in tanks and aircraft; but it should not be concluded from this that even in those days it did not possess up-to-date fighting weapons. During the period of the Stalin five-year plans the Red Army had been thoroughly rearmed and equipped with modern machinery of war. The Soviet command had the military formations at its disposal with which to administer counter-blows. These counter-blows were struck at German armoured formations which had dashed on ahead of their main body, and cut them off from their infantry and bases of supply. The German command was obliged to take measures to meet this serious threat to its panzer forces and give battle to the counter-attacking Soviet forces. Stubborn engagements were fought in which the odds were heavily against the defenders. But they had the highly important result of slowing up and, in places, even of temporarily halting the German offensive. The Red Army's tactics of active defence wore down and cut up the enemy's forces.

The effect of this was that the German plan to knock out the U.S.S.R. by a blitzkrieg was completely foiled. The Soviet command gained time in which to organise resistance. New armies were being formed in the interior of the country. Notwithstanding the extreme difficulties created by the necessity of evacuating hundreds upon hundreds of industrial plants from the war zones, Soviet industry rapidly increased the output of tanks, aircraft and arms.

The crucial question now was this—and on it the issue of the war depended: would the Wehrmacht succeed in inflicting decisive defeat upon the Soviet armed forces before the Soviet Union succeeded in mustering its powerful resources and setting them in motion?

The German offensive was launched in three directions—towards Leningrad, towards Moscow, and towards Kiev and Rostov.

In the north, towards the end of September, 1941, the German army group advancing on Leningrad reached the outskirts of the great Russian city, but was there halted. The Germans laid siege to Leningrad, and there began that epic defence of the city which converted it into an impregnable bastion of the entire northern sector of the Soviet front.

In the centre, in August, was fought the battle of Smolensk, during the course of which the German formations were also held and kept back until October.

In the south, however, the Germans continued to advance. True, encircled Odessa stubbornly continued its heroic resistance. But the

Germans succeeded in forcing the Dnieper at Kremenchug and out-flanking Kiev, while simultaneously another group advanced southward from Gomel.

The Nazi command decided to exploit its successes in the south in order to compensate for the unfavourable turn events had taken for them in the centre and the north. German forces invaded the Crimea, but here they met with the stubborn resistance of Sevastopol, which adorned its glorious traditions with new deeds of valour and heroism. Von Kleist's panzer army broke through into the Donbas and advanced on Rostov, which it succeeded in seizing after the Red Army had put up a stubborn resistance. In the early part of October, Guderian's army made a sudden stab at Orel and cut the important Moscow-Crimea railway. After a desperate defence, Kursk and Kharkov fell.

The Germans now turned their greedy gaze on Moscow—the capital of the Soviet Union. Their plan in October, 1941, was to reduce the city by simultaneous blows from Smolensk and Orel. They pierced the Soviet front on the main sector and captured Vyazma, while in the south the important rail hub of Bryansk fell into their hands.

The situation was grave. But the Soviet command had meanwhile built up powerful defences at the approaches to Moscow and around Tula, and the German onslaught was stemmed for a time.

In November the Germans resumed their offensive against Moscow. This time they planned to encircle the capital by advancing from the north through Kalinin, and from the south from the Tula area. The jaws of the pincers were to close east of Moscow, thus severing all the rail communications connecting the capital of the U.S.S.R. with the rear.

Everywhere the Germans encountered obstinate resistance. They failed to take Tula. However, their armoured forces advancing from the north managed to penetrate to within a few dozen kilometres of Moscow.

#### GERMAN PLANS FOILED

By now, however, the sands had run out. All these five months of the war the Soviet Union had been mustering its mighty forces. Reserve armies were now moving up to the crucial sectors of the front. In November, as a result of a brilliant manoeuvre, Kleist's panzer army was defeated and Rostov recovered. Marshal Stalin's main reserves were concentrated around Moscow, and it was here that the general engagement of the 1941 campaign was fought.

The Red Army brought about a turn in the tide of war and passed from active defence to effective offensive operations.

On December 6, powerful Soviet forces suddenly launched a counter-

offensive on every sector of the Moscow front. In the north the Soviet armies attacked from the Moscow-Volga canal, overwhelmed the enemy and forced their way into Klin. By so doing they out-flanked and threatened the rear of the German northern group advancing on Moscow.

In the southern sector Guderian's positions were pierced in a number of areas. In the battle which ensued the German group was defeated and lost immense quantities of armaments. Its remnants began to retire westward. Hitler's beaten armies were hurled back hundreds of kilometres. The German defeat at Moscow laid its impress upon the whole subsequent course of hostilities. The Red Army had managed to change the course of the war; from active defence it passed over to a successful offensive against the enemy forces.

By the spring of 1942 the vast front stretching from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea had frozen to immobility. The significance of this fact cannot be exaggerated. For the first time in the course of the second world war huge tank masses had been forced to a standstill. The Germans had failed to gain a decisive issue. The victories registered by the Red Army in the autumn of 1941 and the winter of 1941-42 indicated that the balance of forces had begun to swing in favour of the Soviet Union.

When the summer campaign of 1942 began there was still only one front in Europe—the Soviet-German front. This put an extremely heavy burden on the Red Army. It may be remembered that in the last world war Germany had to fight on a number of fronts right from the very first, yet she was able to carry on the war for four years. In the present war all the main forces of Germany and her satellites were on the Soviet-German front. The Germans had driven deep into the territory of the Soviet Union and had seized important economic regions; they had excellent communications in their rear; they had reached the gates of Leningrad and were not far from Moscow and Rostov.

The Hitler clique could not wait. They decided that the campaign in the Soviet Union must be finished before the Allies could invade Europe. The German command massed powerful shock groups on the southern sector of the Soviet-German front. Hitler's plan was to break through to the Volga, then turn north, cut off the capital of the Soviet Union, surround it and take it from the east. At the same time the Germans reckoned on forcing their way into the Northern Caucasus and seizing the oil regions of the Soviet Union. The Nazis believed that the invasion of Iran and even a "campaign into India" were already practical possibilities.

In other words, the Germans designed in the summer of 1942 to play a new variation of the blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union.

The Germans succeeded in piercing the front in the south, and their panzer formations sped eastward. The position of the Red Army was exceedingly grave. However, the Germans' attempt to widen the breach towards the north-east was foiled in the vicinity of Voronezh, where a formidable defence zone was created. This formed the pivot on which a new line of front was built and consolidated. It followed the course of the Don as far as Stalingrad, and then turned and continued southward.

The Germans were stopped in the north-east; but they pushed towards the south-east and, having captured Rostov, invaded the North Caucasus. Here they reached the foothills of the Caucasian range and advanced as far as the region of Vladikavkaz. But in this difficult mountain country the force of the German offensive gradually spent itself against the stubborn resistance of the Soviet troops.

But what was happening to the Germans' main plan, which called for a broad outflanking movement leading to the capture of Moscow? Unable to break through northward across the Don, which was securely defended by the Red Army, the main German army group, under Field-Marshal von Paulus, stabbed directly eastward, into the big elbow formed by the Don. They aimed for Stalingrad, their idea being to tear up the Soviet front, completely to cut off the Caucasus, and then, moving northward along the Volga, to get at Moscow from the rear.

In the south, the Red Army's position was serious. An immense breach yawned in the front, all direct communications were cut, and the Germans had seized some of the richest regions of the country. The German advance had to be halted at all costs.

When they reached the Don at the eastern edge of the elbow, the Germans encountered strong resistance from the Soviet troops. They succeeded in forcing the Don, but the resistance of the Red Army forces which covered Stalingrad grew stiffer and stiffer and slowed up the advance of the German panzers. After a number of fruitless attempts, the Germans at last managed to reach Stalingrad from the south-west.

At this point the Germans may well have imagined that the first stage at any rate of their offensive operations against Moscow was completed. They were certain that Stalingrad would fall into their hands without difficulty. The city was not a fortress and could not possibly withstand the pressure of the huge forces which were assaulting it. But here another "miracle," as European and American journalists called it, occurred—the third after Leningrad and Moscow. The Germans maintained the assault on Stalingrad for four months, and in the end they failed to take the city which wreathed itself in immortal glory.

Marshal Stalin ordered Stalingrad to be held at all costs, and his

order was zealously carried out. The heroic struggle began on the outskirts and then shifted into the city proper. Grim battles were fought for every district, every street and every separate building.

The Germans massed a vast host of tanks and aircraft outside Stalingrad. They adhered to their usual method of attack. In front came the panzers, followed by the infantry, while the Luftwaffe incessantly bombed the city, the Red Army's positions and its rearward areas. But Stalingrad was another demonstration of the superiority of Soviet defence over German attack. The panzer assaults were repulsed by the joint efforts of infantry and artillery. Not only anti-tank guns, but all forms of artillery, including heavy guns were used to combat the panzers, battering them and setting them on fire. Soviet fighter aircraft fiercely engaged the Luftwaffe. The Nazi bombers destroyed the city, but they were unable to inflict serious damage on the troops, who were well sheltered and adequately protected by anti-aircraft defences.

Stalingrad was a gigantic life-and-death struggle of two armies, from which the Red Army emerged victorious. The German army sustained a decisive defeat.

#### STALINGRAD—THE BEGINNING OF THE DECLINE OF THE GERMAN ARMY

The major objective of the German offensive was not Stalingrad but Moscow. And if the Germans persisted in their assault on Stalingrad and, bleeding from every vein, kept battering their heads against its walls, this was only a sign of the bankruptcy of Hitler's strategy. Time was passing, winter was approaching, and the German offensive had lost all sense and meaning. What then? Retreat? That would mean an open admission of defeat on Hitler's part. Press the offensive in other directions? The Germans did try to break through to the north, but were stopped. Their advance had come to a standstill along the whole gigantic arc, from Voronezh to Stalingrad and further south to the North Caucasus. Nothing was left but to continue the hopeless attacks on Stalingrad, involving the sacrifice of tens of thousands of German lives only for the sake of saving Hitler's personal prestige. The Germans did succeed in reaching the bank of the Volga in the northern part of Stalingrad, but the defenders of the city continued to hold firm.

With the front now stable north and south of Stalingrad, the hands of the Soviet command were untied. Powerful forces were massed with the deepest secrecy on the flanks of von Paulus's army, in pursuance of Stalin's brilliant plan for its annihilation. On November 19, 1942, the Red Army passed to the offensive.

Two Soviet armies, north-west and south-east of Stalingrad respectively, broke through the front and wiped out the German and Rumanian troops which were operating on these sectors. Soviet tanks and motorised troops poured into the breach and, joining forces at Kalach, closed the ring in the rear of Paulus's army. Soviet infantry followed in the wake of the tanks and formed a solid barrier, which the Germans were now powerless to break through.

However, it was not enough to surround an army 330,000 strong; it had still to be annihilated, and in the conditions of modern warfare this was no easy job. Hitler hoped to keep the encircled army supplied by air, while he created a powerful shock group under General Manstein, which was to force its way through to Stalingrad from the south. But these plans were also foiled by the Soviet command. In December the Red Army struck a new blow in the middle reaches of the Don. It broke through the front and surrounded and annihilated the Italian troops operating in this area, thus completing the isolation of the German groups surrounded at Stalingrad. In December, too, Manstein's armoured forces which were trying to come to the rescue of Paulus's army were defeated and routed.

In January, 1943, after the German command had rejected the ultimatum for the surrender of the surrounded German group, mopping-up operations began. They were completed on February 2, 1943.

The encirclement and demolition at Stalingrad of the German army 330,000 strong is an operation without parallel in the history of war. It was carried out in the face of fortified fronts, which constitute a severe handicap to the development of manoeuvring operations.

Stalingrad marked the turning-point in the war. First of all, it demonstrated the all-round superiority of the Red Army over Hitler's army. The Germans' initial advantages, which consisted in numerical superiority of tanks and aircraft and the ability to handle these arms effectively, had now vanished. In the Stalingrad operation the Soviet tanks and motorised corps broke through to the enemy's rear to a depth of many hundreds of kilometres. Throughout the campaign the carefully planned co-ordination between the mobile bodies and the main forces—infantry and artillery—was securely maintained. The Soviet air force gained the upper hand over the Luftwaffe and foiled the plan for supplying the encircled army from the air.

Stalingrad definitely revealed the bankruptcy of Hitler's foolhardy strategy. The Germans reached the extreme limit of their incursion into the Soviet Union, but failed to vanquish the Red Army or to crush the Soviet people's will to resist. The defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad presaged the decline of the German army.

Towards the end of 1942 a change in the entire course of the second

world war took place. Simultaneously with the battle of Stalingrad, the Allies executed their splendid landing in North Africa.

In the Soviet Union the highest value was put on this operation. Marshal Stalin, replying in a letter to questions submitted to him by Mr. Cassidy, Moscow correspondent of the Associated Press, said: "What matters first of all is that since the campaign in Africa means that the initiative has passed into the hands of our allies, this campaign radically changes the military and political situation in Europe in favour of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition. It undermines the prestige of Hitlerite Germany as the leading force in the system of Axis powers and demoralises Hitler's allies in Europe."

At the same time, the Red Army, exploiting the brilliant successes gained in the battle of Stalingrad, passed to the offensive on all sectors of the Don and North Caucasian fronts. Under its incessant blows the Germans retreated in disorder, sustaining gigantic losses as they did so. In February, 1943, Rostov was retaken. The offensive spread to the sectors of the front north of Voronezh, where the Red Army, by a brilliant operation, seized Kursk. Kharkov was fiercely disputed. In January, 1943, the Red Army broke the blockade of Leningrad. By the end of the winter campaign the front came to a standstill west of Kursk (where the celebrated Kursk salient was formed), and beyond along the River Northern Donets, and along the River Mius west of Voroshilovgrad and Rostov.

#### WESTWARD MARCH

Hitler did not draw the lessons from this series of drastic defeats. In the summer of 1943 the Germans made another attempt to administer a "crushing blow" to the Red Army; for this purpose they concentrated immense forces of tanks, aircraft and infantry against the Kursk salient. They launched their offensive on July 5. As the German command conceived it, this offensive was to lead to the fall of Kursk, then develop eastward, and end in the capture of Moscow.

The battle for Kursk was characterised by great violence. The Germans threw an enormous number of heavy tanks and self-propelled guns into action. But the Red Army was not caught by surprise. Its infantry and artillery valiantly repelled the assaults of the enemy's armoured forces. The battle assumed frenzied proportions, but a powerful counter-blow by the Soviet tanks settled the issue. Another of Hitler's strategic plans had failed ignominiously. His broadly conceived offensive was repulsed and was at once followed by an offensive by the Red Army, which put a final end to the Hitlerites' dream of victory in the east.

In July, 1943, the Allies landed in Sicily and then on the Appennine Peninsula. Italy capitulated. This was a serious blow to the Hitler



coalition. Furthermore, it brought the opening of a second front in Western Europe within measurable distance.

On July 12, the Red Army launched a new offensive, and already by August 5 Orel and Belgorod were liberated. A bitter struggle was fought for Kharkov, which was finally recovered by the Red Army on August 23. The Soviet forces were now advancing along an immense front from Orel to the Azov Sea. In the early part of September the Donbas was liberated, and this was followed by the liberation of Bryansk on September 17. The offensive spread to the north, where, on September 25, the Red Army entered Smolensk.

A front which the Germans had been fortifying for two years was shattered in a space of two and a half months. All the Germans' attempts to make a stand on delaying lines were unsuccessful. The Red Army swept irresistibly forward towards the Dnieper. Hitler gave orders that the Russian advance be checked at all costs on the banks of this broad waterway. But the Red Army captured town after town in the Ukraine east of the Dnieper, then by a sudden manœuvre reached the river north of Kiev and south of Pereyaslav, and forced it on October 7.

The historic battle for the Dnieper began. The Germans put up a frantic resistance, counter-attacked with large forces of panzers, and tried to hurl the Soviet troops back across the river. But all in vain. On November 6, after a series of fierce battles, Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, was liberated. The Dnieper was forced in its southern reaches and the Germans were bottled up in the Crimea.

The objective of the winter campaign of 1943-44 was the Ukraine west of the Dnieper. The Red Army's Kiev group struck southward and threatened the communications of the German forces which were still clinging to the areas of Krivoy Rog, Nikopol and Nikolayev, the economic importance of which are is known. To parry this threat, the German command decided to recover Kiev at all costs. For two months a stiff battle was fought with large German armoured formations which strove to break through to Kiev from the south. As the result of a stubborn defence, the Kiev area was retained. On November 26, Gomel was liberated.

But while the Germans were concentrating their efforts on the fighting south of Kiev the Red Army launched a series of surprise blows on other sectors. In January, 1944, an entire German army was surrounded and annihilated in the vicinity of Korsun-Shevchenkivsky. Shortly after the Red Army recovered Krivoy Rog and Nikopol.

Even more important was the Red Army's offensive west of Kiev. By swift stabs it captured Berdichev, Sarny, Lutsk and Rovno and reached the area of Tarnopol. The effect of these operations was to isolate the Germans' southern armies in the Ukraine from their

central armies. In January, too, an offensive was launched at Leningrad and the Germans were hurled back 150-200 kilometres west of the city. The siege of Leningrad was now definitely broken.

In the early days of March, 1944, when the thaw, with its mud and floods, had already set in in the south, and the Germans were confident that now they would receive a respite, the Red Army suddenly began an offensive along the entire Ukrainian front. Kherson, Nikolayev and Odessa were liberated. Soviet troops forced the Rivers Dniester, Pruth and Sereth, reached the western frontiers of the U.S.S.R. and then crossed into Rumania.

In March and April, Soviet divisions broke through the German defences on the Sivash and the Perekop Isthmus and swept into the Crimea. Other Soviet units forced the Kerch Straits and advanced along the southern coast of the Crimea. The offensive was pressed forward with great vigour, and soon the entire Crimean Peninsula was liberated. Sevastopol was captured by a brilliantly executed assault.

By the end of the third year of the war the Germans had lost on the Soviet-German front over 7,800,000 men and officers, killed and taken prisoner, some 70,000 tanks, 60,000 aircraft and more than 90,000 guns. In the summer of 1944 the Red Army launched a mighty offensive in Belorussia, which then spread to the north and south. The attacking Soviet troops pushed their way forward for hundreds of kilometres, fighting stern and costly battles amid most difficult and trying natural conditions, including forests and marshes.

The German central formations were routed. The Red Army in one month's fighting alone took more than 150,009 prisoners, including a number of generals.

The triumphant career of the Soviet forces operating in Belorussia and in the Baltic countries and in the south—in Soviet Moldavia and the Balkans—was marked by strategical planning of a high creative order and by no less brilliant execution. The material strength of the Red Army, on the other hand—the immense power of its artillery, tanks and aircraft, which made such short work of the Germans' resistance—was the embodiment of the creative spirit of the entire Soviet people. If Soviet fire and steel had not been weightier than German fire and steel, victory would have been impossible. The Red Army excelled the Wehrmacht both in numbers and fighting quality of tanks, aircraft and guns. This was the result of the creative effort of Soviet workers and engineers, the fruit of collective intelligence and talent and collective will. The power of this creative effort was multiplied by the fact that it embraced all the nationalities of the Soviet Union, men and women of all ages and professions, from the factory worker to the research scientist. And in the army, too, the

creative spirit of victory embraced all ranks, from the private to the experienced commander of armies.

The Red Army deflated the reputation of German arms and demonstrated its all-round superiority over the army of Hitlerite Germany.

## *Chapter Two*

### FIGHTING SKILL

#### STRENGTH AND ABILITY

MODERN WAR IS A WAR OF ENGINES AND OF RESERVES. THE RED ARMY is equipped with splendid artillery and first-class tanks and aircraft—the overwhelming bulk of which is Soviet-manufactured.

Thanks to the skill and the self-sacrificing efforts of the Soviet home front, and to the friendly assistance of the United States of America and Great Britain, the Red Army possesses adequate supplies of rifles, automatic firearms, mortars, shells, cartridges, mortar bombs, aerial bombs and the like. It also possesses excellent motor vehicles with which to bring munitions up to the front and to transport infantry long distances in the course of a day.

The Red Army likewise possesses numerous reserves with which to replenish its forces. All these are essential for victory. But they are only prerequisites, not victory itself. Armaments, no matter how powerful they may be, may become nothing but piles of crude metal if they fall into the hands of unskilled soldiers. And the soldiers themselves may become—quite unnecessarily—victims of the enemy's fire and sustain irreparable losses if they act inefficiently or are badly led by their officers. Consequently to win a battle, and in the long run a war, what is needed is not only good weapons and plenty of fighting men, but also the ability to derive the utmost advantage from the weapons and to lead the men intelligently.

The Nazis have usually attempted to justify their military reverses on the ground that the Red Army relied on brute force. This is a fable, invented by the Germans to excuse their failures and to conceal the truth about the terrific defeats their army has sustained at the hands of the Red Army. It is an attempt to hide the utter bankruptcy of the German generals and officers, whom Nazi propaganda loudly advertised as invincible masters of the art of warfare.

If the Red Army depended only on brute force, it would not have had a sufficiency of armaments and men with which to maintain a prolonged offensive. To conduct such intricate operations as have distinguished the Red Army's actions all through the war, while relying solely upon brute force, is entirely out of the question.

The Red Army has been able to defeat the Wehrmacht because of its superior morale, its superior military skill, and the superior proficiency of its men and officers. These qualities are persistently inculcated into the Red Army by its supreme commander, Marshal Stalin.

In the first year of the war Joseph Stalin issued an order-of-the-day which has become historic. In it he said that the Red Army possessed all that was needed to defeat the German army, but that it lacked only one thing, namely, the ability to utilise to the full the first-class material with which the country was supplying it. He therefore ordered the rank and file—the machine-gunners, artillerymen, mortarmen, tankmen and flyers—to study their weapons to perfection, to become expert at their jobs, and to learn to hit the enemy unerringly; and he ordered the general commanders to learn to perfection the art of co-ordinating operations of the various arms and to become experts in the leadership of troops. He insisted that the army must master the art of modern warfare and acquire fighting skill to perfection. And we can see from the course of the war that the Red Army has obeyed the order of its leader.

The chief method of operation of the Red Army is manoeuvring. These are tactics which fully answer the demands of modern warfare. Their effectiveness depends upon boldness, originality and flexibility. They make it possible to strike decisive blows at the enemy, to surround him and annihilate him.

These are the tactics pursued by the Soviet commanders. In the course of the war they have become masters in the art of co-ordinating the action of troops and experts in directing them; and they have out-matched their adversary by their superior knowledge and intelligence. The Soviet infantry officer has an excellent general military training, but at the same time he is well versed in the use of artillery, aircraft and tanks, and in military engineering. This enables him correctly to co-ordinate the action of troops on the battlefield.

The Soviet officer displays constructive initiative, resourcefulness, daring and originality in the application of combat methods. He eschews anything stereotyped and always tries to plan an engagement in a way that will take account of the condition of the enemy, his possible modes of action, the nature of the terrain, and his own strength and resources.

In order to attack the enemy by surprise, he not only conceals the movements of his own troops, but strives to lead his adversary astray and to cause him to divert forces in a direction which will be least favourable to him.

When, in the summer of 1943, the Soviet troops were preparing to repulse the enemy's attacks on Kursk, they camouflaged their positions in a masterly way. German scout planes flying at a height of only a

few score metres could see nothing but bare fields. Yet in these seemingly deserted fields entire Soviet regiments, with their artillery, mortars and tanks, were concealed. A German document which fell into the hands of the Soviet troops stated: "Dive-bombers flew over the hill and reported that they observed nothing. As a matter of fact there was an augmented regiment entrenched there, although it could not be detected from a distance of five metres. Before the offensive we did not believe there was a quarter of what the Russians actually had there."

When they started their offensive at Kursk, the Germans did not know the location of the Soviet defences. The Soviet commanders deceived the enemy not only by skilfully camouflaging their actual defence works, but by erecting a host of sham ones—1,500 false trenches, battery positions and observation posts, some 900 moveable dummy tanks and 220 dummy aircraft. In addition, three sham concentration areas for large armoured forces and thirteen sham airfields were laid out. The Germans were fooled. They put in a lot of work to make their offensive a success, but all in vain. In many cases the enemy's artillery and aircraft wasted their shells and bombs on defence works which were nothing but dummies.

The Soviet officer is able to outwit the enemy and to counter ruse by ruse. Typical in this respect was the preparatory work done by the artillery officers during the break-through of the Germans' fortified positions on the Perekop Isthmus, in the Crimea. Information was received that the Germans were burrowing like moles into the ground to perfect their defences. In particular, they had dug numerous deep fox-holes as a protection from our shells. How to outwit the German fox? It was decided to include a sham creeping barrage in the plan of artillery preparation.

The artillery pounding of the Germans' Perekop positions lasted two days, during which large numbers of solid fortifications were blown sky-high. On the day of the decisive attack the artillery again poured a hurricane fire into the enemy. The fire was then shifted into the depths of the German positions, and this was the signal for a feigned infantry attack. The Soviet troops remained in their trenches, about a hundred metres from the enemy's positions, and opened fire from machine-guns and tommy-guns; they also stuck up out of the trenches about a thousand dummies of soldiers and cheered loudly to create the illusion that the attack had begun.

The Germans were completely taken in. They crawled out of their dug-outs and fox-holes and took up position in their trenches. Their artillery also opened fire. Some twenty batteries were counted which the Germans had until then carefully concealed and refrained from bringing into action. A solid wall of bursting shells covered the approaches to the German trenches. But they were wasted on the

empty air. The Soviet infantry were still in their initial positions, securely sheltered in their trenches. The positions of the enemy's concealed batteries were registered and it was not long before they were silenced by gunfire and aerial bombardment. When the signal for the real attack was given, the Red Army men dashed forward, quickly mastered three lines of the enemy's trenches, and pierced his defences.

### CALCULATION AND RISK

The Soviet tanks are fine machines, and their excellent fighting qualities are exploited to the full by the Soviet tankmen, who are experts at their job. A famous unit in the Red Army is the First Tank Guards Brigade. When the war broke out it was stationed on the River Pruth, the Soviet frontier. The brigade was commanded by Colonel Katukov, who is now a colonel-general of tanks.

The story of this brigade is an epitome of the story of the Red Army in the three years of war with the Germans. The brigade retreated into the heart of the country, fighting bitterly all the way, and ended up not far from Moscow. In October, 1941, near Orel, Colonel Katukov fought General Guderian's panzer army for eight days on end, and inflicted a severe defeat on it. Then in forty hours the brigade made a dash—360 km. along the chord of an arc of the front to Volokolamsk, to take up its positions for the defence of Moscow. In the fighting on the Volokolamsk highroad, which leads into Moscow, tank commander Lavrinenko engaged eight enemy tanks and set fire to seven of them. In 1942 the brigade was engaged in defensive actions at Voronezh. During the stern battle of the Kursk salient on July 6, 1943, the brigade bore the shock of the German panzer assault. A fine exploit was performed on that day by Junior Lieutenant Shalandin. He dashed his tank to the crest of a hill which German Tiger tanks were mounting, fired a couple of shells, and descended as swiftly as he had come. Shalandin based his new tactic on cool calculation. The Tiger is slow in turning, and while it is making ready to fire one shot there is time to put three into it. Swerving now to the right, now to the left, Shalandin wrought havoc among the German panzers, and that day knocked out twenty of them. The Soviet advances of the following year brought the brigade back to the Pruth. . . .

Interesting too is the career of the commander of one of the battalions of this brigade, Major Gavrishko. He was with the brigade on the River Pruth when the war broke out, at that time with the rank of junior lieutenant. At dawn on June 22, 1941, the day the Germans invaded Soviet territory, Gavrishko climbed into his tank to take up battle stations. He took part in the brigade's fighting retreat from the Pruth to Orel, to Moscow and to Kursk; and then, together with

the brigade, returned by the same road to the Dniester and the Pruth, past the same places through which he had retreated. By this time he was commanding a battalion.

When his battalion reached the Pruth, Major Gavrishko's battalion was ordered to crash the German defences and open a road for the brigade. Early in the morning the battalion broke through the German front and in one day advanced twenty kilometres, fighting all the way. In the course of the advance, Major Gavrishko noticed that the battalion's plan of action as originally approved needed correction. To secure his flank he would have to make a detour and capture a town which was not in the battalion's line of march. The capture of the town would, moreover, facilitate the operation of the whole brigade.

It was dusk when Gavrishko's tanks reached the outskirts of the town. They had still to cross a bridge, but it had been set on fire by the Germans. A hundred metres of flame separated Gavrishko's battalion from its objective. The major took the risk. The tanks dashed at full speed across the burning bridge, firing on the move. The German guns were silenced before they could fire a single shot. Just as the last tank emerged from the roaring furnace the bridge collapsed. Gavrishko had risked and won. The town was taken.

In the spring of 1944 Major Gavrishko's battalion reached the frontier of the Soviet Union, at the very spot where three years earlier, on June 22, 1941, at the call to action, he had climbed into his tank and started his war career as a junior lieutenant.

### THE GOD OF WAR

The Red Army is equipped with powerful modern artillery. It has guns of every variety of calibre, which can be used for every kind of military operation—piercing the enemy's powerful fortified lines, pursuing him in retreat, repulsing attacks of infantry and tanks, keeping the Luftwaffe at bay. In an attack, the Soviet artillery deluges the enemy with a continuous avalanche of fire, which paralyses his will to resistance. Its artillery has been built up to be one of the Red Army's most powerful arms. Marshal Stalin has referred to it as the "god of war."

In the majority of cases the Soviet troops have had to deal frontal blows in order to pierce the Germans' defences. The artillery and air offensives are therefore an essential element of Soviet tactics. The artillery offensive barrage, batters down the enemy's defences, disorganises the formations of his troops, disrupts his fire system, blasts lanes in his minefields and wire defences for the infantry and tanks, etc. It acts as one of the most important factors in ensuring the success of an attack by creating a devastating hurricane of fire

from thousands of guns which sometimes continues for several hours.

A brief description of the way the Germans' defences at Leningrad were shattered will give some idea of Soviet artillery in action.

The German defences at Leningrad were the most formidable on the Soviet-German front. They consisted of three zones, each from eight to twelve kilometres broad. Each zone had an intricate system of trenches arranged in three or four lines (and in some places, as for example, at Uritsk, in eight lines) and including a number of strong-points and centres of resistance, well defended with engineering works. Krasnoye Selo, Pushkin, Pavlovsk, Ropsha, Gatchina and other towns were converted into regular fortresses. The Germans had ten to fifteen pill-boxes or bunkers to every kilometre of front, about half of them built of ferro-concrete. In some areas, near Pushkin, for example, the density of pill-boxes and bunkers was as high as thirty to the kilometre. A large number of ferro-concrete fire-posts were of the universal type. They were ferro-concrete casemates which could withstand a direct hit from a 150-mm. shell. The casemates were flanked by concrete emplacements. These fire posts could be used as observation posts, machine-gun sites for firing at ground and air targets, and as mortar positions. They had all-round range of fire, and did not protrude much above the ground, which afforded them excellent concealment.

The approaches to the German strong-points and centres of resistance were protected by formidable anti-infantry and anti-tank obstacles—minefields, concrete pillars, ditches, road blocks, wire entanglements, etc. There were minefields and wire entanglements in front of every line of trenches. The wire obstacles were of the most diverse types: knife-edges, spirals, fences, nets strung on low stakes, and one or two rows of ordinary barbed-wire entanglements. Wire obstacles were combined with mines, which were laid either in clumps in front of the wire obstacles, or in solid minefields, as well as at the immediate approaches to fire-points and trenches. Jumping mines were also used, which, when touched, rise in the air to a height of one and a half or two metres and then explode, spattering everything in the vicinity with their splinters. In inhabited places the Germans set booby-traps on a generous scale. Both wire obstacles and mines were laid so as to be covered in their turn by flanking and oblique fire. The entire forward edge was protected by a minefield of about one hundred metres deep. All areas accessible to tanks were protected by anti-tank ditches, three and a half metres deep and seven or eight metres wide and plentifully sprinkled with anti-tank mines. The long-range guns with which the Germans shelled Leningrad were installed in ferro-concrete or strong log and earth shelters.

After this brief description of the German defences at Leningrad it will be understood why the Germans themselves called them the



"North Wall" and "iron ring," and considered them impregnable.

Rudolph Harig, war correspondent of the Engineers' Department of the General Staff of the German army, who was captured by the Red Army in January, 1944, stated: "In the autumn of last year, while I was in Berlin, I received a new assignment. I was sent to the Leningrad area. I had every opportunity to examine the fortifications, and found them to be splendid. This was also the opinion of military experts in Berlin and at the front. They were all convinced that our fortifications were impregnable and could withstand any assault of the Soviet troops. However, recent events have shown that we under-estimated the Russians' abilities. The fire of the Russian artillery literally swept everything away, even the most powerful engineering works which we had been erecting and perfecting for two years."

The Red Army battered down these fortifications and lifted the blockade from Leningrad. Each kilometre of the defences was pounded by the fire of hundreds of guns, in a bombardment lasting two and a half hours.

But the artillery preparation is only one stage. Artillery plays an even greater part in the actual attack. In order to prevent the enemy from restoring his shattered fire resources, to suppress any fire-points which show signs of revival, to protect the infantry and tanks in attack, and to seize strong-points in the first line of defences, artillery support is essential. When the infantry have poured through the breach into the enemy's internal positions, the artillery supports them as they advance from one objective to another. Thus the Soviet infantry and tanks attack to the continuous accompaniment of artillery, or, as they say in the Red Army, to the sound of artillery music.

¶ The operation in the Ukraine which ended in the encirclement of the German divisions at Korsun-Shevchenkivsky began with a double break-through, from the west and from the east. In the east the breach in the Germans' defences was forced by Marshal Koniev. The Germans attempted to close the gap and cut off Marshal Rotmistrov's tanks, which had penetrated deep into the German positions and left their own bases a long way behind them. But the attempt was foiled by the foresight and skill of the Soviet artillerymen.

In the vicinity of the villages of Tishkovka and Pisarevka the Soviet infantry, in the course of their offensive, dislodged the Germans from a hill, but were unable themselves to consolidate their positions. The hill remained unoccupied by either side. The Germans were anxious to recover it, for it offered a convenient position from which to maintain fire at the Soviet troops who were pouring into the breach. The Soviet artillery staff foresaw that this was precisely the sector where the Germans were most likely to launch a counter-attack.

Anti-tank artillery regiments were accordingly promptly brought

up and disposed between the two villages, and in such a way that from whichever direction the panzers might approach they would expose their sides to the fire of the Soviet guns. It was this bariage that prevented the Germans from breaking out of the ring of encirclement.

At first, after strong artillery preparation, Tigers and Panthers, escorted by bombers, attacked the artillery's positions on the right in a sector held by a battery commanded by Lieutenant Vitvinov. Meeting with no success here, the Germans turned their attention to the left, and fiercely attacked Major Oleshko's regiment, hurling against it seventy or eighty tanks simultaneously which advanced in groups of ten or twenty from different directions. Their aim was to split up the regiment's compact battle formation. They first attacked the right flank in an attempt to surround a battery commanded by Lieutenant Zlobin. Some of the tanks got within as close as 150 metres of the battery. Zlobin repulsed two attacks, in which he set fire to nine of the tanks.

Thereupon the enemy began to outflank the entire regiment, proceeding by way of a ravine on the left. But here he was met by the fire of batteries which until then had remained silent. The Germans lost another six tanks. All that day the Germans launched one attack after another, every one of which failed. During the night the Germans tried to get within close distance of the artillery positions, evidently with the intention of opening fire at the Soviet guns with the first light of day. But the artillerymen were on the qui vive all night. At the first streak of dawn they anticipated the Germans and opened fire first. One Panther was knocked out at a distance of only 70 metres from the Soviet positions.

In the end, having lost twenty-five tanks, the Germans called off their attacks on Olëshko's regiment. There were sixteen guns in the regiment, and they all emerged practically unscathed from the contest. The Germans failed to close the breach, and this action contributed considerably to the success of the Soviet operation at Korsun-Shevchenkovsky.

#### MASTERS OF THE SKY

Besides first-class artillery and powerful tanks, the Red Army possesses an efficient air force. It is equipped with first-rate modern bombers, stormoviks and fighters designed by talented Soviet engineers, of whom we may mention Yakovlev, Il'yushin, Lavochkin, Petlyakov and Tupolev. These planes are supplied in considerable numbers by the Soviet aircraft industry. In the course of the war the Soviet Union has also received aircraft from the United States and Great Britain. Flying these craft, "Stalin's falcons"—as the gallant airmen

are called in the Soviet Union—have inflicted many a defeat on the enemy.

If in the first year of the war the Soviet air force was superior to the German only in quality, now it excels it both in number and quality of aircraft. But quantity and quality of aircraft are not decisive factors in themselves. For an air force to be able securely to protect the infantry and ensure the success of their offensive operations, expert flying personnel is needed. The Red Army has this personnel and in adequate numbers.

An air offensive is an essential and invariable element in every Red Army operation. The Soviet airmen have won superiority in the air and hold it securely. They are the masters of the sky.

Alexander Pokryshkin's name is well known in Britain and America. He is a first-class Soviet ace and might lay claim to the title of champion fighter pilot of the world. Alexander Pokryshkin is thirty-one years old. He was born in 1913, in Novosibirsk, Siberia. He started work at an early age as a roofer, then went to work as a fitter and toolmaker at a factory. He was called up for military service in 1932, and as he displayed a definite inclination for the air service he was sent to the Kacha flying-school, near Sevastopol.

When the war broke out he was holding the rank of captain. In his very first combat sorties he proved himself an expert fighter and shot down one enemy aircraft after another. His skill developed with his fighting career. To-day he is a colonel and commands a fighter division. During the war he has made 550 sorties, fought 137 combats and has not sustained a single defeat. The fuselage of his fighter is decorated with fifty-nine stars, indicating the number of enemy craft he has shot down. Pokryshkin fought most of his combats with an enemy exceeding him numerically from six to ten times. On one occasion, while leading ten aircraft, he gave battle to eighty German aircraft, and emerged victorious. He has become a terror to German airmen, and when he appears in the sky the Germans frantically wireless their pilots: "Look out! Ace Pokryshkin is up!"

For his exceptional skill and heroism, Alexander Pokryshkin has been thrice awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, a distinction which so far nobody else holds.

Pokryshkin's skill in air combat is emulated by all the other airmen of the Red Army. Pilot Ivanov is a case in point. Here is an account of six combats he fought with German aircraft in one day in the vicinity of the Rumanian town of Jassy.

On that day the fighter regiment to which Ivanov belongs was assigned patrol duty over the Soviet positions. A group of Yakovlevs, flying in pairs, took off in the early morning. Two German Me.109's, which were lurking in the clouds, attempted a sudden attack on Ivanov and his partner. They were noticed in time by another pair

of Soviet fighters, who were flying higher. These immediately warned Ivanov of his danger and abruptly dived to encounter the Germans head-on. The Me.109's were forced to renounce the attack. They dived steeply to evade an encounter. But Ivanov, who had the necessary reserve of speed, made a sharp wing-over which brought him above the Me.109's. Taking advantage of this he got on the tail of the retreating Messerschmitts and, overhauling them, shot down the leader at a range of fifty metres.

Ivanov and his partner then climbed into the clouds. Two other Me.109's spotted them and tried to get on their tail. They were discovered in time. Ivanov made a sharp 180-degrees turn and went to meet his opponents head-on. The Germans were scared by this move and tried to get away. But Ivanov and his partner overtook them and at almost point-blank range, thirty metres, shot down one of them.

An hour later Ivanov and his partner were again up in the air flying at an altitude of 4,000 metres. While patrolling they encountered two Focke-Wulf 190's proceeding on practically a parallel course and about the same level. To attack them from this position would have been useless, as they would take evasive action as soon as they observed the danger. Ivanov decided to resort to a ruse. Pretending not to have noticed the enemy, he turned and made a feint of retiring eastward. Maintaining a straight course for some time and keeping continuous watch on his adversaries, he made a sudden turn, which brought him into the rear of the Focke-Wulfs. The latter failed to observe the menace and continued on their course. This enabled Ivanov to get within 100 metres of them and to shoot down one of the Focke-Wulfs by well-aimed fire.

Ten minutes after this third success, Ivanov and his partner encountered another couple of Focke-Wulf 190's. The Germans tried to escape westward. Ivanov decided on another ruse. He made a wide circuit of 350-degrees away from the Focke-Wulfs, then sharply turned to the left to intercept them. As he neared them, one of the Focke-Wulfs was caught in his sights and he opened fire at a range of 100 metres. The German took evasive action, weaved and descended, but Ivanov kept hard in pursuit, firing all the time, and at last shot him down.

Fifty-five minutes later Ivanov and his partner were up again protecting the ground troops.

Almost from the start he spotted a couple of Me.109's a little below him at a distance of about a kilometre. He decided to attack. When the enemy fighters were on a parallel course, flying towards him, Ivanov let them pass, then, with an advantage in altitude of 800 metres, he abruptly turned and got on their tails. When the Messerschmitts observed that they were being pursued, they turned

and tried to escape. But as they were banking, Ivanov shot down one of them from a distance of thirty metres. Thus ended his fifth combat.

Three hours later Ivanov was out on patrol again, and after making a few turns saw four Me.109's. The enemy also observed Ivanov and at once split into two pairs. One of them quickly disappeared in a low-level cloud-bank; the other turned and made a feint of retreating westward. After proceeding for a while on a straight course, they suddenly climbed steeply and turned in a southerly direction.

Ivanov at once guessed the enemy's ruse. The object of the first pair was to lure him to a lower altitude, while the second pair climbed with the object of attacking him from above. Ivanov decided to attack the second pair. He climbed to 2,500 metres and lay in wait for them. According to his calculations they were bound to appear in that zone. He kept a sharp look out and soon spotted them. As he launched into a frontal attack, the Messerschmitts turned westward in an attempt to escape to their own territory. But this crude tactical blunder exposed their tails to Ivanov, who immediately took advantage of the opportunity, dived, overtook them and shot down the leader.

That was the sixth enemy aircraft shot down by Ivanov that day.

#### HOW THE DNIEPER WAS FORCED

When the world learned that the Red Army had won the battle of the Dnieper, it was astonished. The Germans were determined to hold the Dnieper line at all costs. They considered their positions along the river impregnable. The Berlin military commentators dilated at great length on the width and depth of the Dnieper, and on the invulnerability of the German positions on the high west bank. The Germans intended to sit tight on the Dnieper line, and towards the end of September, 1943, the Nazi command issued an order to the troops demanding that the Dnieper positions be held no matter what the cost.

But already, at the beginning of October, the Germans were faced with the unexpected. The Soviet troops reached the Dnieper and forced the river—which in places is more than a kilometre wide—straight from the march.

The German generals and officers, accustomed as they were to guide themselves by stereotyped tactics, were confident that from the day the Red Army's advanced units reached the Dnieper, it would require at least a month or six weeks before the pontoons and the other regulation equipment for crossing water barriers could be brought up, so as to permit the forcing of the river to be attempted according to all the rules of military engineering. Meanwhile they

reckoned still further to strengthen their positions and to bring up reserves. So reckoned the Germans, guided by their military manuals.

But, as the Red Army saying goes, the German proposes, the Russian disposes. The Soviet officers did not wait for the main body to come up with the pontoons. The advanced units began forcing the river with whatever material they found to hand. It was a highly dramatic spectacle. Officers and men swam the cold October waters of the Dnieper or propelled themselves across, supported by logs, planks, fascines, waterproof capes wrapped around bunches of twigs, on boats provided by local peasants—literally on everything that could keep afloat. Guns and ammunition were ferried across on hastily-contrived rafts. Once they had crossed, these advanced units dug themselves into the bank and put up a staunch defence against the German attacks. The bridgehead was held until the main body arrived on the scene, built regular bridges and developed the offensive. The battle of the Dnieper was won thanks to high military proficiency, skilful leadership by the Soviet officers, and the resourcefulness and bravery of the Red Army men.

### 304 BULLETS ACCOUNT FOR 304 GERMANS

Every infantryman in the Red Army is trained to handle rifle, tommy-gun, mortar, light machine-gun and hand-grenade. Thanks to this, when the infantry are attacking, they are able to maintain uninterrupted fire. If a mortarman or machine-gunner is killed or wounded, his place is immediately taken by a comrade. The same with gun crews: each of the numbers can replace the others. As a result every Soviet gun carries on as long as it remains undamaged and as long as at least one member of its crew remains alive.

Sharp-shooting is widely practised in the Red Army. Its trained snipers are to be reckoned by tens of thousands. They often operate in conjunction with artillery and mortars. The guns and mortars open fire at German bunkers or pill-boxes until they become untenable to the survivors. Then, as the Nazis race for another shelter, the snipers pick them off. How effective the art of sharp-shooting may be can be demonstrated by a few figures. It is estimated that in the last world war it took an average of 46 shells and 2,100 cartridges to kill one man. Nobody, of course, has yet computed similar data for this war. However, here are the results of the work of two Soviet snipers. Feodosi Smolyakov killed 125 Germans for an expenditure of 126 cartridges. He may therefore be said to have saved 5,750 shells and 262,374 cartridges! Ivan Dobrik accounted for 304 Germans with 304 cartridges, an average of one cartridge per German. Consequently, he economised 13,984 shells and 638,096 cartridges!

## RESOURCE AND DARING

Most Soviet soldiers have had at least a seventh-grade schooling. Education, combined with native intelligence, makes the Russian a first-rate soldier.

War brings the national characteristics of a people into bold relief. Shrewdness and resource are innate qualities of the Soviet character. In war, as in civilian life, the Russian does not like to "fumble for a word." He is quick at repartee and quick at finding a way out of a tight corner. The resourcefulness of the Russian soldier forms the subject of folklore and fable. The men of the Red Army have not lost these characteristics and they display them under the most varied conditions of modern warfare.

Private Vorontsov had to drag a motor truck out of a river. The river was 3 metres deep. A tractor was available, but how was the chain to be affixed to the sunken machine? Vorontsov was not long in finding a solution. He unscrewed the corrugated tube and face-piece from his gas mask and attached the tube to a long rubber hose. Then donning the mask, he calmly descended below the surface. The mask securely covered his nose and ears and permitted him to breathe through the hose, the other end of which was above the surface. Within a few minutes the chain was affixed and the truck dragged out of the river.

The activities of Soviet scouts are particularly rich in instances of intelligence and resource. This is not surprising. A soldier out on reconnaissance is often thrown on his own resources. He has no comrade to advise him and there is no officer near by to tell him what to do, or to come to his rescue. Scouting is one of those war jobs in which a soldier can display his courage, training and proficiency to the full. And these qualities have time and again come to the aid of Soviet scouts in precarious, and often seemingly hopeless, situations.

On one sector of the front the enemy had retreated under cover of darkness to an intermediate line and was preparing for defence. Soviet scouts were ordered to ascertain the forward edge of the German defences, their fire system and the nature of their fortifications. Fifty or sixty metres in front of where the German forward edge was believed to lie ran a small stream. On its eastern bank stood a lone shed. The scouts decided to use it for observation purposes and cautiously crawled towards it. Unfortunately, as they entered, one of the soldiers knocked against some planks which were leaning against the wall and they fell with a terrific clatter. The Germans were alarmed and opened fire from machine-guns and mortars. Something had to be done to divert the enemy's fire. And Russian shrewdness found a way. The scouts noticed a sheep lying in a corner of the shed and they at once

drove it out. The sheep ambled down towards the stream, in the direction of the enemy. No sooner did the Germans espy the sheep than they turned their fire on it. The cause of the incident had been found; the Germans were reassured and ceased fire.

All day the scouts sat calmly in the shed observing the enemy. They brought back detailed information about his fire resources and the disposition of his forward edge.

Even more amusing was the adventure of another party of Soviet scouts. On this particular sector a river divided the Russian positions from the German. Scouts were detailed to seize a prisoner for interrogation—a “tongue” as the Russians call him. Not far from the enemy’s bank stood a bunker, and observation established that there were ten Germans in it. The scouts made several attempts to cross the river and approach the bunker, but without success. At last one of them hit upon an idea. “The Germans,” he argued, “are very fond of chicken. No doubt they will be just as much tempted by a duck.” He suggested procuring a duck, tying a string to its leg and allowing it to float in the stream near the bank.

No sooner said than done. That night four scouts crawled through the rushes to the bank of the river and early in the morning set the duck in it. The German sentry at once noticed it and called a comrade. A few bursts from a tommy-gun did the trick. One of the Germans stripped and swam for the booty. Four others climbed on to the parapet and watched the swimmer, their mouths watering at the thought of the toothsome breakfast that awaited them. When the ‘sportsman’ reached the bank two of the Soviet scouts pounced upon him, while the other two picked off the Germans. The prisoner was delivered to regimental headquarters and the scouts returned without mishap.

The resourcefulness of the scout is combined with bravery. Three Red Army men were out on reconnaissance near Odessa when they observed three German tanks making for a near-by village. This was information that had to be reported without delay. But the Germans evidently had spotted the scouts and they began systematically firing from machine-guns at a dell, which was the scouts’ sole path of retreat. The Red Army men had only to approach the dell and the machine-guns opened fire. Yet time was pressing. The scouts thereupon resorted to a ruse. One of them crawled off some 150 metres to one side and every now and again showed himself to the Germans. Mostly he exposed his helmet, but that was dangerous enough. The Germans started a regular hunt after him, but he acted cautiously and never showed himself twice in the same place. Taking advantage of the fact that the attention of the Germans was diverted by their comrade, the other two scouts slipped through the dell and hurried back to their unit.



These qualities of the Soviet soldier, and especially his initiative, are inculcated by the whole system of Soviet life. Workers, collective farmers, office clerks, all vie with one another in the performance of their duties. Each tries to improve his methods of work and to devise more perfect processes. They acquire the habit of putting a personal and creative touch into everything they do. This fosters inventiveness and initiative. Naturally, they carry these faculties with them into the army, and all that remains for the officers who train the new recruits is to direct these proclivities into military channels.

### THE COUNTRY'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Gallantry in action and outstanding military skill do not pass unnoticed in the Soviet Union. The country honours its heroes. Whether marshal, general, officer, sergeant or private, their names are made known throughout the land and their fame is universal. Their deeds are acknowledged by government decorations—orders and medals. These distinctions, besides the moral satisfaction they give, carry with them certain material privileges, such as free travel, exemption from income tax, reduced rents, etc.

The highest distinctions conferred by the Soviet government are the titles of Hero of the Soviet Union and Hero of Socialist Labour.

The title of Hero of the Soviet Union carries with it the Gold Star medal. The title and the star may be conferred more than once. It is provided that a hero who earns two gold stars shall have his bust erected as a monument in his birthplace. In the case of a hero who earns a third star, his bust is erected on a pedestal with a suitable inscription in the Palace of Soviets in Moscow. How hard it is to earn the triple star may be judged from the fact that so far there is only one man in the Soviet Union who holds that distinction. He is Guards Colonel Alexander Pokryshkin, the ace fighter pilot whom we have already mentioned.

The highest Soviet military order is the Order of Victory. It was instituted on November 8, 1943, and is reserved only for high commanding officers. The names of those who hold the Order of Victory are entered on a memorial tablet in the Grand Kremlin Palace, in Moscow. The first recipients of the order were Supreme Commander Marshal Stalin and Marshals Zhukov and Vasilievsky.

The oldest of the Soviet military orders is the Order of the Red Banner. Its origin goes back to the early days of the Red Army and forms part of the history of those stern and glorious times of growth and victory. In September, 1918, Stalin had temporarily left Tsaritsyn for Moscow. Voroshilov, speaking with him over the direct wire, recommended that the government should mark its appreciation of the men who had distinguished themselves in action

on the Tsaritsyn front. "It is highly important to bring back with you from the capital decorations and rewards." In due course Stalin wired Voroshilov from Moscow: "The decorations have been designed and ordered."

On September 16, 1918, the government issued a decree instituting the Order of the Red Banner. It was a distinction the recipients might well be proud of. Receiving it from the hand of a representative of the government, they knew that the deeds they had performed for the sake of their country had been appreciated by the Soviet people, for whose liberty and happiness they had shed their blood and risked their lives.

The value of this oldest Soviet military decoration is enhanced by the fact that it was awarded to the great leaders of the Soviet people—Lenin and Stalin.

The decision of the government of November 27, 1919, conferring the Order of the Red Banner upon Stalin, read:

"In the hour of mortal danger, when, hemmed in on all sides by a close ring of enemies, the Soviet regime was repulsing the onslaughts of the foe, at a time when, in July, 1919, the enemies of the Workers' and Peasants' Revolution were nearing Krasnaya Gorka, at that hour of dire peril for Soviet Russia, Joseph Stalin, assigned to his fighting post by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, was able by his energy and indefatigable efforts to rally the faltering ranks of the Red Army.

"By his personal example in the fighting line and under fire he inspired the ranks of the fighters for the Soviet Republic.

"In acknowledgment of his services in defence of Petsograd and of his subsequent self-sacrificing labours on the southern front, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee resolves to confer upon Joseph Stalin the Order of the Red Banner."

To this day this order remains one of the most honourable awards to men of the Red Army for services to their country and their people.

The Order of Lenin, instituted in 1930, is the second highest distinction, after the titles of Hero of the Soviet Union and Hero of Socialist Labour, both for military and for civil services.

The most widely conferred decoration is the Order of the Red Star, which was inaugurated in 1930.

During this war, besides the Order of Victory, other military distinctions have been instituted. The Order of the Patriotic War, 1st and 2nd degrees, has already been won by many men and officers of the Red Army. It is distinguished from other orders by the fact that, together with the credential which accompanies it, in the event of the death of the recipient, it is presented to his family to be preserved as a relic.

In July, 1942, the Order of Suvorov, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degrees,

the Order of Kutuzov, 1st and 2nd degrees, and the Order of Alexander Nevsky were also instituted. These orders are conferrable only upon commanding officers. The Order of Bogdan Khmel'nitsky, 1st and 2nd degrees, is likewise an officers' decoration, but may also be conferred upon commanders of partisan detachments. The third degree of the order, however, may be conferred not only upon Red Army officers, but also privates and non-commissioned officers, as well as partisans.

The institution of the Order of Bogdan Khmel'nitsky was hailed with enthusiasm by the soldiers of the Ukraine. Their statements in the newspapers expressed deep satisfaction that, in addition to the existing orders bearing the illustrious names of the military leaders Suvorov, Kutuzov and Alexander Nevsky, there has now been created a new order under the name of a famous son of the Ukrainian people.

Among the Ukrainians who received this Order was Guards Major Boris Tarasenko who, together with his sapper battalion, displayed supreme courage and gallantry in forcing the River Dnieper. Thanks to his indefatigable efforts and personal direction of the building of the bridges, our regiments and divisions were able to sweep across the Dnieper and consolidate the bridgeheads without delay. The first to cross, under heavy enemy fire, was Tarasenko himself. Tarasenko demonstrated that he has inherited that love of country, that daring, persistence, resolution and hatred of the enemy which distinguished his forebear, the Ukrainian national hero. It was only fitting that Major Tarasenko should be granted the Order of Khmel'nitsky, 2nd degree.

Another hero of the crossing of the Dnieper was Lieutenant-Colonel Josif Kaplun, by nationality a Jew. He organised the collection of ferrying material and personally directed the movement of his troops across the river, which was carried out swiftly, efficiently, and without loss of life or material. He also displayed great intelligence in the selection of the bridgehead on the west bank of the Dnieper. Lieutenant-Colonel Kaplun was decorated with the Order of Bogdan Khmel'nitsky, 2nd degree.

There is one more Soviet order, the Order of Glory, which holds a place of its own, inasmuch as it is granted solely to the rank and file. Only in the air force are men up to the rank of junior lieutenant entitled to receive it, since as a rule aircraft crews do not include privates.

Numerous Red Army men, in these three years of war, have been decorated with the For Valour Medal and the Military Service Medal. The heroic defences of Soviet cities have been perpetuated by the Lenin-grad Defence, Moscow Defence, Odessa Defence, Sevastopol Defence and Stalingrad Defence Medals. There is also the Caucasus Defence Medal and the Partisan of the Patriotic War Medal, 1st and 2nd degrees.

Every day of the war has produced new heroes and a large number of Soviet soldiers have been decorated more than once. Indeed heroism is a mass phenomenon in the Red Army. From the beginning of the war down to August 1, 1944, orders and medals had been awarded to 2,644,329 men. Entire regiments, brigades and divisions have been decorated for gallantry. The Eighth Guards General Panfilov Division, in whose ranks fought the twenty-eight heroes who stood up to the fifty German tanks outside Moscow, displays on its battle standard the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner. There are units of some Soviet regiments in which every man has been decorated.

### *Chapter Three*

## INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

### LEARNING TO BEAT THE GERMANS EVERYWHERE

TAKE A LOOK AT A MAP OF THE SOVIET-GERMAN FRONT. THE THEATRE of hostilities covered an immense territory from the Barents Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. The flanks of the contending armies abutted on these two water basins. From sea to sea, along a front of three thousand kilometres and more, the armed forces of the Soviet Union were locked in a life-and-death struggle with the armies of Nazi Germany and her associates.

The area of that front is as varied in climate and natural features as it is vast. But the Red Army has inflicted defeat on the Germans everywhere—in the north and the south, in forests and marshland, in the open plain and in mountains, and the force of its blows gained steadily in power and destructive effect. The reason for this is that the Red Army has constantly been training, perfecting and steeling itself.

Deep in the interior, far from the front line, the Soviet soldiers have been perfecting their military proficiency. The training of reserves has been carried on unceasingly, so as to maintain an unbroken stream of fresh regiments to the front to strengthen the effort for victory. A stream of soldiers, toughened in body and spirit, members of all the nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union, has flowed to the front from the central regions of Russia, from Siberia and the Urals, from the Central Asian republics and the Caucasus.

The vast expanse of the Soviet Union permits the training of soldiers for action in the diverse conditions prevailing on the different sectors of the front. Climatic conditions vary considerably in different parts of the Soviet Union. In the Far North we have regions of eternal

frost and scanty vegetation. These are succeeded by a temperate zone densely covered with coniferous and deciduous forest. Further south come the vast expanses of the forest-steppe region and the fertile steppe zone of the Black Sea and Caspian coasts—the Kuban, the Don and Western Siberia. Then, still further south, come the territories of Central Asia, where for three hundred days in the year not a single cloud covers the sun.

This brief geographical description furnishes the key to the training of the men of the Red Army, for which the 22,000,000 square kilometres of the Soviet Union constitute, as it were, an immense laboratory. The northern areas, which are covered with snow for the best part of the year, provide a convenient field for the training of ski troops. Here men are hardened to stand forty degrees of frost, storms and blizzards. In the forests of Siberia, hunting wild animals trains the future soldier to be an unerring shot, and fosters in him courage and coolness in face of danger. The Siberian trapper can shoot a squirrel in the eye, so as not to spoil its valuable skin, and can find his way through pathless forests by sun, stars and landmarks. The Siberians make excellent snipers and scouts.

While it is still autumn in Central Russia, the north is already snowbound and the Red Army men there go through an all-round training for winter operation. When winter sets in these men are generally incorporated into the army in the field, equipped with special knowledge and experience for action under the trying conditions of winter.

The early onset of spring in the Caucasus and Central Asia makes it possible to give the soldiers swimming instruction already in April, and even in March, so that by the summer these regions are able to supply forces well trained to negotiate water barriers.

Thus it is possible to train men all the year round for every species of military operation and for employment on every sector of the extensive war front.

The underlying principle of the system of training in the Red Army is to teach the men *all* that is needed in action and *only* what is needed in action. Route training is practised in many units. The troops undergoing training are constantly on the move, and are given instruction in each new place they come to. A definite schedule of movement is drawn up, with the exact day and hour indicated when each new training site is to be reached. The idea is to inculcate the value of time and precision in war-time. In these constantly changing camp sites, the commanders teach the men shooting, grenade-throwing and bayonet fighting. The variation of terrain enhances the value of this training; it also accustoms the troops to operate at a distance from their bases, and inures them to the hardships of campaign life.

However, this is not the only way Red Army men are trained for stern battle. The whole life and regime in the training units is designed to toughen and steel them. The officers are always seeking for new ways of perfecting the military knowledge and proficiency of the troops. Going to or coming from the exercise field or the shooting range, the officer trains his men to act by command. When on the move the units usually avoid roads and are accustomed to negotiating ditches, streams, hills and gullies.

Actual experience of the army in action is made wide use of in training. Many regimental staffs keep albums of cuttings from army newspapers and magazines, arranged according to type of action. They are studied by commanders for their own instruction. During exercises, officers will cite instances from actual practice by way of illustration of solution of problems offered by the trainees; the officers undergoing instruction compare their own actions with the actions of officers at the front under similar conditions, and rapidly learn to recognise their mistakes and correct them. As part of the training of officers, lectures and talks by commanders from the front are arranged on various subjects of the training programme.

#### MEN ARE TAUGHT ONLY WHAT IS NEEDED IN BATTLE

All commanders—from non-commissioned officers to generals—make a point of continuously instructing their men and imparting to them their own combat experience. In the life of a regiment or division, whether in the rear or at the front, not a single moment is wasted. All training is carried out under conditions approximating as closely as possible to actual battle conditions.

This is the regular practice in the Red Army. Here is a case in point, taken from the experience of a tank brigade which was being trained to take part in the operation for the relief of Leningrad in 1943.

The brigade was a newly formed one; the tanks had only just been received and the men were young and untrained. Rough country—the type of terrain in which tanks are usually called upon to operate—seemed to them to offer insuperable obstacles. They gazed at the steep hill-slopes with curiosity and trepidation. To leave the road for the forest seemed to them an extremely risky enterprise. Few of them were yet proficient in firing from a standstill, while firing on the move was still an unknown experience. It would require long and intricate instruction before these men became skilled, resourceful, knowledgeable and daring tank troops.

The commander stood in front of a high hill at which the men gazed with diffidence. This was no place for a tank, they thought.

“Which of you will mount that hill?” the commander asked.

The men looked as if they thought he was joking. But his tone showed that he was in earnest.

"But no tank can take that incline, comrade lieutenant-colonel. It's too steep," they answered in chorus.

"Who is the best driver among you?" the commander asked again.

The men looked uncomfortable. The commander elicited that Pashchenko was considered the best driver among them.

"Well, then, Pashchenko," he said. "Go ahead."

Pashchenko afterwards said: "I never thought my tank could do it. I took a careful look and decided that the best thing would be to sidle up. I began to mount, thinking I would come tumbling down head over heels any minute. But to my surprise I saw the tank was taking it. I kept a firm hold on it, and forgot everything else. If I only get half-way up, I thought, it will be easier then. But before I knew where I was, I was on the crest of the hill."

"Next!" ordered the commander, and the next tried and succeeded. And one after the other, all the tanks climbed the steep and seemingly unsurmountable hill.

The tankmen practised driving through bogs, where a steady, even pace had to be maintained, and where any jolt or sudden spurt might land them hopelessly in the mire. They practised crashing their way through woods. They climbed and descended precipices. They got stuck in mud and snow. And with every day, the mud-covered but cheerful crews grew more and more confident. Sometimes their machines would break down and they would find themselves marooned for two or three days in some "hole" where they knew it was useless calling: "Tractor!" They were thrown on their own resources. And it was a considerable source of pride to bring their tanks back under their own power and to report "All's well."

Then they practised raids. The problems assigned them grew more and more difficult. They had to proceed by night, in the dead of winter, without lights, and find the "enemy" in an indicated area. Again they tumbled into ditches or fell from bridges. But they persisted and steadily gained in proficiency.

A new element was added to the training: co-ordination with infantry. They had to go into action escorting a platoon, company or battalion. They were already adepts at driving and manning their machines and were good gunners. They had lost their fear of wire entanglements and minefields. They could gauge the strength of the ice on a river; they could engage a pill-box or bunker; they knew how to fight in the streets of towns and villages.

They became forest-dwellers, living among the snow-covered trees in the cold and the murk of the short winter days. In dug-out and wood hut, the talk was only of the coming operation.

The tanks did not work alone now. They trained together with

neighbouring divisions, learning to take fortified lines. The infantry got used to the tanks; the tommy-gunners would climb briskly on top of them, the sappers go on ahead, and the scouts keep a vigilant and unflagging look out. The training was now shifted almost to the forward positions, where two observation posts were erected offering a good view of the left bank of the Neva. The enemy's fortifications were kept under constant observation.

Every tank driver was told what his objective would be when the break-through came. Now, after long and persistent training, these former collective farmers, factory workers and office clerks were first-rate tank troops whom nothing could daunt or dismay or stop.

### LEARNING TO REDUCE ENEMY FORTIFICATIONS

You are on one of the sectors of the Soviet-German front. The forward positions are still dozens of miles away, but you can distinctly hear the reverberation of the guns and the roar of aircraft engines. To the right and left of you instruction in tactics and shooting is in full swing. A group of officers are studying problems of co-ordination in the field. A little further on wireless operators are undergoing instruction. And further on still staff officers are making out combat briefs.

"This is the rearward area of the army," your guide tells you. "Reserve units are training for battle."

Now you have approached within close distance of the forward lines. You hear the rattle of machine-guns and the burst of shells. And here, too, in close proximity to the enemy, you find that officers and men are perfecting their training, if anything with greater zeal and intensity than in the rear.

An attack on an enemy fortified zone is being practised. Sappers, taking advantage of every fold in the ground, look for mines and clear lanes in wire entanglements. A little further on you see trenches and pill-boxes. As this is all pointed out to you, you are told that it is an exact copy of the enemy's line on this particular sector of the front: minefields, wire obstacles of all types, a labyrinth of trenches and communication ways, fox-holes, machine-gun nests, mortar and gun emplacements, command posts and observation posts. It is a regular training laboratory, a workshop of knowledge and experience, where platoons, companies and battalions are undergoing training night and day.

Here is an example: This battalion took up initial positions in the early morning. At the commander's signal it advanced to seek contact with the "enemy." Its road lay through marshy meadows, dells, and thick scrub and over hills. The difficulties were enhanced by concealed pitfalls and deep ditches filled with water. It was impossible



to swerve to the right or the left. Proceeding by this route, the battalion had to reach a given line at a given hour.

That line is a river. In places it is as much as 400 metres wide. The right bank is at present deserted. But suddenly men armed with tommy-guns break out of the scrub lining the bank and throw themselves into the water. They are wearing cork belts and air cushions, their tommy-guns are slung from their necks, their kit tied to their heads. They have scarcely reached the middle of the stream, when other men emerge from the scrub, drag out of concealment rafts, collapsible dinghies and plank boats, arrange guns, mortars and machine-guns on them, and cast off. They paddle towards the opposite bank, where the tommy-gunners have already landed and established a bridgehead which one company is fighting to extend.

On landing the troops move forward through a swamp towards a steep hill. They advance steadily, leaping from hummock to hummock, at times sinking up to their knees in the swamp. The artillerymen follow, laying paths of brushwood for their guns. A red rocket soars up into the sky. It is the signal for the assault. The guns open fire. The rattle of machine-guns and the crackling of rifles mingle with loud cheers, as the riflemen, clinging to bushes and tree-trunks, climb the steep slope. They bring their grenades into play. . . .

Six hours have elapsed since the battalion took up its initial positions and the moment the crest of the hill was attained. They have been six hours of immense strain for the men.

Life at the front is accompanied by severe privation and hardship, and victory goes to the man who is toughest in body and spirit. These qualities do not come of themselves. They are the result of hard, persistent and painstaking training and are inculcated by the whole regime of army life.

Thus in the course of the war itself, all arms of the Red Army perfect their knowledge and proficiency. Infantrymen, artillerymen, tank men, airmen, and sappers train together in common exercises, night and day, acquiring new methods of fighting.

#### LESSONS ARE DRAWN FROM EVERY BATTLE

In training and instructing their men, Soviet commanders utilise the experience of every battle, the exemplary action of troops and the feats of individual men and officers.

Let us go over to some Red Army regiment which is in the thick of a fierce engagement with the enemy. The Germans have occupied delaying positions and are doing their utmost to hold them, pouring a hail of lead into the attackers. Bullets fall at the rate of ten per minute per square metre of ground. But now the Soviet artillery comes into action, and light and heavy machine-guns open fire. The

Soviet troops boldly attack and dislodge the enemy from his positions.

To whom does the credit of the victory belong? Naturally to all who took part in the action—to artillerymen, mortarmen, machine-gunners and infantry. But although they all acted efficiently and in co-ordination, nevertheless some must have displayed greater valour than others, wielded bayonet or grenade more effectively, taken more prisoners. In a word, in every battle there are individual men or even whole units who distinguish themselves over and above the rest, or introduce some innovation in tactical methods. Should the significance of their actions be passed over? Of course not, and Soviet officers, after every action, always review it to discover what was new in it and strive to make use of this in subsequent engagements.

After a battle an officer assembles his men and makes a thorough analysis of the action. He not only relies upon his own observations, but questions others as to the behaviour of their subordinates and builds up a composite picture of the battle. In this he receives material assistance from junior and non-commissioned officers, who share with him their observations and conclusions as to the conduct of their men. He is thus able to give a lively and comprehensible account of how victory was won, illustrating his ideas with concrete examples. He also dwells on any mistakes his subordinates may have made and gives advice on how to avoid them in future. Thus the best achievements in the use of weapons are brought to the attention of all the men. Similar analyses are made in officer groups and in the staffs of regiments and divisions.

When an officer reviews the course of a battle and speaks of the men whose example is worthy of imitation, he both instructs his soldiers and at the same time strengthens their morale.

This is of immense importance in fostering the fighting qualities of troops. A soldier who has distinguished himself is called in front of the ranks. He is the cynosure of all eyes. The commander speaks of his bravery, thanks him for the faithful service he has rendered his country, and then pins a decoration on his breast. This ceremony makes a deep impression on the assembled troops and fires them with the ambition to display equal bravery, for they know that no act of valour will pass without recognition.

There are other methods by which soldiers who have distinguished themselves are made known to their regiment and division, to the whole army and the country. Their deeds are described in newspapers, magazines and books. Their commanders write to the relatives of the men, praising their heroism. Rolls of honour are kept in every regiment. By all these methods the soldierly virtues are inculcated in the younger men.

## SOVIET GUARDS

The actions of the finest regiments, and especially of the guards regiments, are studied and imitated with special zeal.

The Soviet guards are the heirs of the fighting traditions of the old Russian guard, which was founded by the great reformer of Russia, Peter I. That was nearly two and a half centuries ago. Since then the character of war has radically changed. New qualities are demanded of guardsmen.

Modern war is a war of engines. Yet, and indeed for that very reason, a greater physical and moral strain is imposed on the soldier than ever before. The unparalleled density of fire, the perfection of modern fighting weapons, the unusual length of battles, all enhance the significance of the deeds of the individual soldier. It may be said that while the wars of the past demanded dazzling but brief and momentary displays of valour, modern war demands constant heroism, unflagging persistence and granite-like staunchness and resolution.

The Soviet guards which came into being in this war with the German invader have proved a mighty force, fully conforming to the character of modern warfare. The Soviet guardsmen are the pick of the army, men of initiative and resource who always strive to make the best use of their weapons and to perfect their tactics.

When von Paulus's hordes were stabbing towards Stalingrad, four Soviet guardsmen, anti-tank riflemen, earned nation-wide fame. Their names were Boloto, Aleynikov, Samoilov and Belikov. One of them, Pyotr Boloto, told the story of that day, and his tale reveals the inner soul of the guardsman, the staunchness, tenacity and unshakable resolution of the true soldier. This is what he said:

"We were sitting in our slit trenches eating our morning porridge, when somebody shouted: 'Tanks!' I carefully put my porridge aside, thinking I would eat it later. I had everything fixed up all nice and convenient in my trench; on the left, little earthen shelves for my things, and on the right grenades. Well, I had barely put my mess-tin on the shelf when, sure enough, there were the tanks coming. Only they were not making straight for us, but were moving rather to one side. Ahá, I thought, they mean to outflank us. Things moved pretty fast. We saw the first tank and I dropped down beside the rifle, took aim and fired. As I did so I heard Belikov firing too. The tank didn't catch fire, but just came to a standstill. At that moment I didn't see any other tanks and I said to Aleynikov: 'Keep your eyes skinned. Hit them as soon as you see them.' But just then a second tank came up and covered the first one. There it stood until the crew from the knocked-out tank climbed into it. We began

firing at the second tank, but we must have missed, for after standing still for a while, it moved on.

"Then they all came, moving one after another along our positions. I saw there were a lot of them, so I said to the boys: 'Give it to them, lads, give it 'em guards fashion. For country and Stalin, for our wives and children! If we must die, then let's die together.'

"We opened fire at the second tank. It burst into flames. I must tell you those tanks burned pretty fiercely. They all moved past us and plastered us from their guns and machine-guns. Shells burst all around us. Earth spattered into the trench. It was a hot time. All I could see was dark rings in front of my eyes, and I kept marvelling to myself that I was still alive. Not far from us stood one of our machine-guns. Well, they blew it sky-high. It may just have been bad luck, or maybe the fellow was lazy and hadn't dug in deep enough—I can't say. At any rate, one hit and it was all up with him. That machine-gun didn't speak again. But we sat there alive and kicking. Our trenches were snug and well built.

"The third tank burned so fast that none of the crew even tried to jump out of it. When I saw that I shouted to Belikov in his trench: 'Well, old cock, how goes it?' 'Not so bad. And how goes it with you?' 'Not so bad either.'

"Well, I thought, if it's not so bad then it's all right.

"We had little talks like that every now and again to keep our spirits up. But you could see from their faces that not one of them was flinching. None of them even blenched.

"After that we had a go at a fourth tank, and it came ~~to a~~ stop. But there were plenty more of them behind it, so we found it pretty tough all the time. All the same we kept up those little conversations. Well, at that moment one of their aircraft came diving down on us. My God, how it dived! I crouched down flat at the bottom of the trench. But I couldn't stand it long. I jumped to my feet, shaking my fist and cursing it in our good old miners' style. Well, it shunted off after a while; but the tanks kept coming and coming. It was hot work. I found myself all covered with sweat. As luck would have it my rifle began to heat up and became too hot to touch. I had to take my cap off to hold it with, otherwise it would have burned my hand.

"And the tanks kept coming and coming. My rifle was so hot that I arranged with Belikov to fire in turns—first me, then him. So it went on. We fought those tanks all day. I kept firing and firing. Once I happened to glance at Aleynikov, and I could see by his face that he wasn't feeling so good. Well, that was natural, he was only a lad although he was a guardsman. 'Now then, Aleynik,' I said. 'Keep your pecker up, boy. We are going to live through this all

right.' And Belikov shouts to me from his trench: 'Now, look out, Boloto, don't miss, mind.'

"He didn't have to tell me that. I knew for myself that we mustn't miss. If we started missing it would be all up with us.

"The tanks were now coming nearer and nearer, and we doing our best to keep them off. Their fire got hotter and hotter. And we agreed among ourselves: either life or death, but no surrender.

"At this moment I saw that Belikov had left his rifle and was writing something on a piece of paper. 'What's that you are writing?' I asked him, and he answered: 'I'm writing a leaflet. In the name of all four of us. I say here that we are fighting like guardsmen, and we will not give in alive. It will be something to remember us by. Perhaps our fellows will come and find it.'

"By that time we had knocked out fifteen tanks. There they stood among the weeds in the field. Some of them were burned out, others had just stopped and couldn't move. It was already getting dark. And as night fell the rest of the tanks began to turn to the right and left and leave the field.

"That is how we beat them off, in proper guards fashion. And we are all four of us alive to tell the tale."

"The guard dies, but does not surrender" was the old saying. The Soviet guards do not surrender, and do not die. They immortalise themselves by their victories.

Where the guards are on the defensive, the enemy cannot pass. Where the guards attack, the enemy cannot hold his ground. That is the traditional law of the Soviet guards. And their example is imitated by all the Soviet divisions.

### LOYAL TO THEIR OATH

For success in action the Red Army not only needs high military proficiency, in other words the ability of every man to wield his weapon to perfection and to understand his part in action; it is equally necessary for its soldiers to be possessed of a high morale, to understand the aims of the Soviet people in the war with Nazi Germany, and to remain faithful to their military oath.

Every recruit on being inducted into the ranks of the Red Army takes the military oath. It runs as follows:

"I, a citizen of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, now entering the ranks of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, take this oath and solemnly swear to be an honest, brave, disciplined and vigilant soldier, strictly to preserve military and state secrets, and unswervingly to obey all military regulations and the orders of my commanders and superiors.

"I swear conscientiously to study the art of war, scrupulously to

cherish military and public property, and to be faithful to my last breath to my people, to my Soviet country, and to the Workers' and Peasants' government.

"I shall be always ready, at the command of the Workers' and Peasants' government, to come forth in defence of my country—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—and, as a soldier of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, I swear to defend it courageously, ably, worthily and honourably, sparing neither my blood nor my life, for the achievement of complete victory over the enemy.

"If by malice aforethought I violate this, my solemn oath, may I bear stern punishment under the Soviet law and the hatred and contempt of the working people."

The oath is administered amid solemn surroundings. The regiment is lined up, the commander calls the roll, and each soldier in turn comes forward, receives the text of the oath from the commander, and facing the regiment reads it aloud. He then signs the oath and resumes his place in the ranks. After that, his whole life as a soldier is governed by the ambition strictly to observe the oath and faithfully to serve his people.

#### THE REGIMENTAL COLOURS ARE SACRED

The standard of the regiment plays a big part in the education of the soldier. Veneration of the colours is a deep-rooted tradition in the Russian army. When a battle begins the regimental standard is carried to the command post and stands there unwrapped. It is always kept in the area of hostilities. If the regiment finds itself hard pressed on the battlefield, the standard is brought out and carried in front of the troops. They are fired with a passionate enthusiasm when they see in front of them the crimson and gold banner with its inscription: "Death to the German invaders!" The news that the standard has been brought on to the battlefield spreads like wildfire among the troops, and they hurl themselves on the enemy with irresistible fervour.

On one sector held by the First Ukrainian Army there was a height called Gora Vysokaya (High Hill), which dominated the surrounding country-side. On it the Germans had erected a formidable strong-point, which held up the advance of the Soviet troops. Captain Vasily Zheltushev's guards battalion was ordered to capture Gora Vysokaya. Having reconnoitred the locality and summed up the situation, he took his battalion forward in a swift spurt, under heavy artillery fire, to the foot of the hill and at once began the assault on the enemy's fortifications.

First to reach the crest was the company commanded by Mikhail

Kuznetsov. In default of a standard, they planted on the hill-top a blood-stained bandage taken from a fallen comrade.

After a while, the Germans recovered from the shock and decided to retake the hill at all costs. Tanks and infantry were hurled against Zheltushev's battalion. The men stoutly withstood the enemy's counter-attack.

The blood-stained flag fluttering on top of the hill could be seen from afar through the smoke of battle. When the regimental commander learned about it, he gave orders for the regimental banner to be sent to the hill. Two mounted men set out under enemy fire, and a few minutes later the red banner was waving on the hill-top. The sight inspired the men with redoubled vigour and they continued staunchly to beat off the assault of the enemy's infantry and tanks.

"Death, but no surrender!" cried Zheltushev to his men. "The standard is with us. Let us not sully the honour of the regiment."

A few hours later at the foot of Gora Vysokaya sprawled two shattered German tanks, several guns and tractors and about two hundred enemy dead. And on the hill-crest the regimental banner waved proudly.

Here is another incident illustrative of the moral influence of the battle standard in the Red Army.

It was at the height of the engagement. At the field dressing-station of a battalion of one of the Soviet rifle divisions, wounded men lay or sat about on the grass. A few wandered among the tents. Some were lightly wounded, others severely. Now and again a suppressed groan could be heard. From the distance came the dull echo of battle and the muffled barking of guns. The head of a guards cavalry regiment appeared on the forest road running past the dressing-station.

"What unit?" asked the commander riding at the head of his regiment, of a wounded infantry lieutenant.

"The glorious 305th Belgorod Division!" replied the lieutenant proudly, as he rose with difficulty to his feet.

"Halt!" commanded the cavalry commander, raising his hand. "Regimental standard forward!"

Then, when the standard-bearer took his place at the head of the halted column, he ordered:

"Remove the cover. Unfurl the banner!"

The wounded men looked on intently with silent agitation. The cavalry commander turned to them and pronounced loudly, so as to be heard by his own men:

"Well, dear comrades, you have performed your duty to our country and people. Now take it easy, rest and recuperate, while we go forward to settle accounts for you with the Germans."

Then, turning to his men, he commanded:

"Regiment, attention! Draw sabres!"

Hundreds of blades flashed in the sun.

"March past under the regimental standard, with sabres drawn, in honour of the heroic and glorious Belgorod Division! In column of six, line to the right. Ma-arch!"

And, with a salute of his sword, the colonel paraded his regiment past the wounded men of the Belgorod Division. At the head of the column, by the commander's side, fluttering and rustling in the breeze, moved the regimental standard, dimmed with the powder and smoke of many a battle, and with its patched holes, dating back to the civil war.

The wounded men gazed with deep emotion and pride at the parade in their honour. Those who could struggled to their feet, others leaned on their crutches or clung to the trunks of trees. And a cheer burst from their throats at the solemn and moving spectacle.

All phases of life in the army are adapted to foster the moral training of the soldier. When the young recruit is handed his weapon for the first time, this too is made an occasion for pomp and ceremony. As he receives his rifle, tommy-gun or machine-gun from the hands of his officer, he is made to think of the heroic efforts of the workers in the rear who devote all their efforts to the making of weapons in order to further victory. The weapon is the embodiment of the patriotic efforts of brother, sister, father or mother. It is the property of the country, it is a means of defence against its enemies. The weapon is therefore something to be loved and cherished like the apple of one's eye.

A cavalryman named Savushkin was wounded in battle. A bullet shattered his arm. He looked for his comrade, Kerim Akhmetov, and found him lying in a fox-hole on a bluff.

"Kerim," he said, "I am going to present you with my tommy-gun."

Kerim drew himself to attention.

"Repeat this after me," Savushkin continued: "I, Kerim Akhmetov guardsman of Morozov's regiment, accept from wounded guardsman, Timofey Savushkin the tommy-gun which he took from the dead hands of platoon commander Pyotr Paramonov, killed in action. With this tommy-gun Pyotr Paramonov killed 114 Germans. With it Timofey Savushkin killed 121 Germans. I swear not to let the tommy-gun fall from my hands until the enemy is completely vanquished. If I should be wounded, I will turn it over, as the commander shall indicate, to trusty hands which will be able to maintain the honour of our guards weapon."

Both men were deeply moved as Savushkin kissed the gun and handed it over to Akhmetov.



## *Chapter Four*

### OFFICERS AND GENERALS

#### WHO ARE THE SOVIET OFFICERS ?

AFTER THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION THE OLD RUSSIAN army ceased to exist. A new army—the Red Army—developed in the battles against the internal and foreign enemies of the young Soviet Republic, in action against the soldiers of the Kaiser and the forces of intervention.

The Soviet government enlisted many former tsarist officers in the Red Army. By January 1, 1919, in the central provinces of Russia alone, 22,000 officers, among them some generals, had been accepted in the Soviet armed forces. Many former officers of the tsarist army fought honestly and selflessly under the flag of the Revolution. Soviet people respect the names of Generals Brusilov, Novitsky, and others. They were Russian patriots and remained true to their people. In the grim years of the civil war they gave all their energies and knowledge to the nation and its Red Army.

But new cadres of officers had to be trained. And sons of the people, workers and peasants, enrolled in courses for commanders to study the art of war.

The first mass graduation from Red Army schools for commanders took place on September 18, 1918. That was a big event in the life of the young Soviet Republic. It patently showed that the Soviet government was successfully building up its own armed forces.

Towards the end of 1918 Red Army officers were being trained at sixty-five courses for commanders. Before the Revolution there were only thirty-five military schools in Russia.

The oldest military school in the Soviet Union is the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic School. It was founded in the first months of the civil war. A photograph in the Red Army Museum shows Lenin speaking to the graduates of this school. He stands on a platform in his characteristic attitude, his body bent slightly forward and one arm raised. Along the walls are lined up men in military uniform. They are the first graduates of the Moscow Courses for Red Army Commanders. The men who attended those courses were called in those days "Kremlovskiye Kursanty" (Kremlin cadets), because the school was located in the Kremlin. Lenin often snatched a few hours to visit the school and chat with the cadets. He showed a lively interest in their progress. Stalin delivered lectures to them. It was in the Kremlin Military

School that he delivered one of his famous addresses on Lenin after the latter's death.

At times, when the situation on any of the numerous fronts became critical, the future commanders laid their textbooks aside, took up arms, went out to fight the enemy, and returned to the Kremlin to resume their military studies only after victory had been achieved.

That was the way all the future Red Army commanders studied in those years—with a textbook in one hand and a rifle in the other. From the masses of the people rose capable, talented men. Workers and peasants became officers and beat tsarist and foreign generals who had spent many years studying the science of war in the leading European military academies.

In the civil war years 50,000 worker and peasant youths underwent special military training and qualified as commanders.

In old Russia the doors of corps of cadets, military schools and academies were tightly closed to workers and peasants. Military knowledge and military leadership were the monopoly of an exclusive caste. The corps of officers, especially the generals, was made up in the main of representatives of the gentry. In 1912, 87.46 per cent of all Russian generals were members of the gentry, and the rest were scions of the upper middle class or of the clergy. Many generals and admirals belonged to titled families, were princes, barons and counts. German barons were particularly numerous in high military positions.

Private soldiers were contemptuously referred to as "cattle" by their aristocratic officers. They could not even dream of an officer's commission, no matter how capable they were. In the pre-revolutionary epoch officers were for the most part promoted to higher ranks not because they showed talent or had distinguished themselves in action, but because they had titles and riches. The system which existed in the times of Peter the Great and Suvorov, when officers' commissions were given to the most capable privates and non-commissioned officers, had long been forgotten.

The Soviet government threw the doors of military schools and academies wide open to the working people. A factory worker, a shepherd, a book-keeper, could become an officer so long as he showed an aptitude for military affairs.

Citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of race, nationality, creed, education, social origin or status, are liable to military service in the armed forces of the Soviet Union. Similarly any citizen may enrol in a military school and become an officer. All that is required is a previous seven to ten years' school education. And since universal obligatory education is the law in the Soviet Union, and there are middle schools everywhere—in all towns and villages—it is obvious that this requirement can be met by anyone.

Military education was widespread in the Soviet

time, and, of course, even more widespread in war-time. The U.S.S.R. has numerous military schools and academies.

The military academies are the pride of the Red Army. In equipment and system of training they yield nothing to the best and oldest European military academies.

The foremost is the Military Academy which bears the name of the famous Soviet General Mikhail Frunze. It trains commanders of military formations. The best military professors and scientists of the country teach in it. It has a library of about a million volumes, in which are collected all the works on military subjects published in the country in the last two centuries and numerous works of military literature from all over the world.

The Artillery Academy trains both line commanders and artillery experts. Many graduates of the Academy have gained fame in battle. Many guns with which Soviet artillerymen have cleared the way to victory have been designed by graduates of the Academy, now Heroes of Socialist Labour.

The Air Academy, which has assimilated the finest traditions of Russian aviation, trains splendid airmen.

The Military Engineering Academy is a first-class school of fortification.

One of the youngest Red Army academies is the Stalin Military Academy of Motorization and Mechanization. It was founded when the successes achieved in the industrialization of the Soviet Union made it possible to supply the Red Army with modern combat machines of home manufacture. The Academy developed with the expansion of the armoured forces. Thirteen years ago it had only two laboratories, and those were rather poorly equipped. To-day, it has scores of laboratories with excellent up-to-date equipment. The Academy has given the Red Army and the war industries thousands of competent commanders and engineers.

Thousands of Soviet officers have received their military education during the present war—on the battlefields, in schools, at special courses and in academies.

Some time before the present Patriotic War against the Germans, military ranks analogous to those accepted in other armies were introduced in the Red Army. During the war the uniforms of Soviet troops have been changed and they now resemble those of the old Russian army.

The war has shown that the Red Army has strong cadres of determined commanders, efficient leaders of troops in the field. They displayed high military skill, self-sacrifice and devotion to the people under the extremely trying conditions of the temporary reverses of 1941. Many Soviet officers have been through the school of hard experience in the past. Some fought in the Civil War and in the

Finnish campaign in 1939. Others—the overwhelming majority—received their baptism of fire on the battlefields in the war against German fascism.

Many of the Soviet generals have won their high titles in the present grim fight against Hitler's armies. Only recently they had the rank of colonel or major. To-day they head large military formations, successfully leading them to victory. New men—captains and even lieutenants, who have displayed their ability as commanders in action—have been promoted to their former posts. Many sergeants now head platoons or have been promoted to the command of companies.

This continuous process of development and perfection of commander cadres is taking place amid the din of battles and the thunder of cannon. Soviet generals and officers grow, develop and become tempered in the fire of war. They are pupils of the Stalin school.

### THE STORY OF MARSHAL ROTMISTROV

The following "profile" of Marshal of Armoured Forces, Pavel Rotmistrov, gives some idea of the characteristic traits of Soviet generals; his career is typical.

Pavel Rotmistrov was born in 1901 of a poor peasant family in a village of the Kalinin Region. In the Civil War he was a dashing horseman and commanded a squadron. When the war was over and the period of peaceful development set in, the young officer parted with his favourite charger, took leave of his comrades, and went to Moscow to study. In the years spent in the lecture rooms of the Academy he acquired a sound military and theoretical education.

Pavel Rotmistrov received his higher military education in a general academy. But the former horseman had a special partiality for the armoured cavalry of modern times. After a period of service with tank units in the Far East he returned to Moscow and became an instructor in the Academy of Motorization and Mechanization. He also wrote his most outstanding scientific work—"*Tanks in a Breakthrough*"—around that time.

We have the following testimony from one of Rotmistrov's friends regarding the military opinions of the future Marshal of Armoured Forces.

"I met Rotmistrov two years before the war. That was in Sochi—the delightful Soviet health resort on the Black Sea coast. Rotmistrov is a man of medium height, wiry, with an energetic face and deliberate movements. We sat on the verandah of the Sanatorium for Red Army commanders. We chatted and watched a group of laughing holidaymakers in dazzlingly white suits on the path below. Then the conversation became more serious and turned on Captain Kuznetsov's recently published book *Tactics of Tank Troops*. Rotmistrov was

an instructor in a military academy at the time. He told me: 'Tanks must be employed in masses. The best opportunity for a tank commander is to be in command of large groups—a brigade, a corps, an army. Those are splendid instruments in an offensive. A concentration of a thousand tanks—that is the dream of every tank commander. With a battering ram like that one could work miracles.' "

Rotmistrov's dream came true.

In 1939 he took part in the Finnish campaign, then he came back to the Academy. Later in 1940 he was again transferred to active service in the army. This man combines the qualities of a serious theoretician and scientist (he has earned the degree of master of military sciences) with the merits of a practical student. He constantly studied the military organism in action. In this he followed the example of hundreds of other Soviet officers. That was the Stalin school of military perfection.

In the war against the Germans, Pavel Rotmistrov began his career with the rank of colonel, as second in command of an armoured division. In the gloomy autumn of 1941 he became commander of a tank brigade.

Those were hard times. The Germans were driving deep into Russia. They had to be stopped at all costs.

One night the tanks of Rotmistrov's Guards brigade moved up with their headlights dimmed to take up their initial positions. The Germans were to be caught off guard, and it was particularly important to keep the direction of the blow a secret. But the roar of engines reverberates in a forest, and the tracks of tanks make a loud grating noise. Some means had to be found to camouflage the sound.

"Remove the silencer from the tractors!" ordered Colonel Rotmistrov. A frightful roar filled the forest. The six tractors made a bigger noise than the entire brigade. Those tractors were sent in a false direction. Meanwhile the brigade, moving in small groups, concentrated in the appointed place. At daybreak it fell upon the enemy with all its weight of steel and fire.

Colonel Pavel Rotmistrov's ruse succeeded. The Germans expected the Soviet tanks to appear from the direction whence came the noise of the tractors, and that was where they had prepared to meet them. Rotmistrov's tankmen overwhelmed the Germans and sent them flying. Rotmistrov foiled the plans of the German command. After several days of continuous fighting, the Germans were compelled to pass over to the defensive. They were held at bay on that sector of the front up to the moment when the Red Army took the offensive.

Large formations of the Luftwaffe began to hunt after the famed tank brigade. German aeroplanes hovered over the woods. On one occasion luck was with them. They discovered the brigade

after an engagement, just as it was concentrating in a grove of stunted trees, about 2-3 kilometres from the forward positions. Dozens of aircraft were already making for the spot to bomb the tanks. Beyond a hill stood German tanks ready to attack and complete the rout of the brigade as soon as the bombers were through with it. But once again the Germans were outwitted by Colonel Rotmistrov. He gave his orders, and when the German aeroplanes appeared, instead of running for cover, the tankmen rushed to their machines and started the engines. The wood became filled with their roar. Slender birch trees cracked as they were flattened down by the heavy tracks. The tanks came out into the open and deployed while on the move. From the commander's tank was given the signal to charge, and the brigade roared towards the enemy positions where the German tanks stood. A fierce engagement ensued. The German planes circled over the battlefield but could not drop a single bomb because it was no longer possible to tell which were Soviet and which were German tanks. Soon Soviet fighters appeared on the scene and chased the "Junkers" planes away. The tank brigade, after destroying many German tanks and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy, disengaged itself and took cover in a dense forest.

Rotmistrov's guardsmen usually charge swiftly and in a mass. They overwhelm the enemy by a powerful onslaught and then take advantage of their mobility to slash the opposing forces, encircle them and wipe them out piecemeal. Pavel Rotmistrov is an expert at these tactics.

Marshal Rotmistrov is a bold and determined leader. He does not fear to take risks when necessary, at the same time doing everything possible to ensure success. His decisions in the field are always distinguished by imagination and they invariably express the essential aims of the action. Rotmistrov is quick at appraising a situation. He painstakingly studies his opponent, weighs up his strong and weak points and then determines the spot at which to deliver the blow. In some cases the attack may start with massed artillery and mortar fire followed by a tank charge. In other cases the enemy is suddenly swept off his feet by an avalanche of tanks with motorized infantry following close behind to consolidate the success. Rotmistrov never follows any cut-and-dried rules in his use of tanks.

Rotmistrov strongly believes in the effectiveness of intense fire opened while the tanks are on the move, and he trains his subordinates in the same spirit. The fire unleashed by Rotmistrov's tank units has a crushing effect.

In 1942 Pavel Rotmistrov was promoted to the rank of Major-General and soon after, in the same year, to the rank of Lieutenant-General. In 1943 he received the title of Colonel-General and in 1944 was given the rank of Marshal of Armoured Forces. A study

of his military career provides an insight into the characteristics of Soviet officers and into the principles of the Stalin school in which Soviet commanders are trained.

In the Red Army the road to promotion is wide open to every officer both in peacetime and, especially of course, in time of war. In the Soviet Union there are no obstacles in the path of a gifted officer. Anyone who is eager to serve his country, strives for military perfection and proves his skill as a soldier in action is sure to be noticed in time and rewarded according to his merits. Neither age, connections, nor intrigues determine the position of a Soviet officer in the Army—only his own actions, the practical results of his activity.

It is in this respect that Pavel Rotmistrov's career is characteristic. Much of his life as a soldier and even of his personal life is typical of most Soviet officers. For Pavel Rotmistrov, like thousands of other Soviet officers and generals, is of the flesh and blood of the Soviet people.

Marshal Rotmistrov was 42 years of age in 1943. The tank formations under his command were then in the second echelon. The commanders of the various units of the formation gathered to celebrate his birthday. At the table were assembled generals and officers of lower rank, Rotmistrov's friends and associates with whom he had fought together on the Kalinin and Bryansk Fronts, or in the battles against Manstein's army which had tried to rescue von Paulus' army group, encircled in the Stalingrad area in 1942. Among the guests were generals, veterans of the Patriotic War, and young officers eager to perform deeds of valour and bring glory to Soviet arms. Animation reigned at the table which was laden with wines and hors d'œuvre. The glasses were filled and one of Pavel Rotmistrov's closest friends, a young colonel with a shock of grey hair, rose to offer a toast.

Just then Rotmistrov's aide-de-camp quietly entered the room and handed him a code message. Rotmistrov read it, slowly rose from his seat and, offering an apology to the colonel who was standing with his wine glass raised, ready to speak, said:

"Permit me, comrades, to offer the first and last toast myself. I have just received an order—we are to take up initial positions to-night. Our tanks are to be thrown into battle. Are all glasses filled? I propose that we drink to victory. Immediately after that the officers and generals are to depart for their units and formations."

That night Rotmistrov's tanks moved up into the terrain of the battle which became known in the history of the Patriotic War as the Battle of the Kursk Salient.

\* \* \* \* \*

Like Marshal Rotmistrov, all Soviet military commanders have come from the ranks of the people. They are children of workers, peasants, professional men.

Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin, who liberated the Crimea from the Germans, also grew up in the countryside. In the records of the parish church of the village of Davidov there is an entry dated June 16, 1894, which says that "a son, Fyodor, was born to the discharged Private Ivan Tolbukhin, a peasant of the Yaroslav Province." The son of a Russian private soldier, a peasant, became Marshal of the Soviet Union.

Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky wears eleven decorations and the Gold Star medal of a Hero of the Soviet Union. He was born in 1896. His father was a railway engineer, his mother worked in a textile mill. It was with great difficulty that he acquired a high-school education. In tsarist Russia this was not easy for the son of a working man and fees were high.

Marshal Ivan Koniev comes from peasant stock. He has devoted nearly all his life to service in the ranks of the Red Army. He distinguished himself as a capable and gallant commander back in the years of the Civil War. Koniev progressed together with the Red Army. He successively commanded a regiment, a division and the troops of a military area. Koniev's talents as a commander have been fully displayed in the present Patriotic War. As commander of the armies of a front, he brilliantly accomplished the encirclement and liquidation of large German army groups at Korsun-Shevshchenkivsky and Brody.

One of the brilliant victories gained by the Red Army in the summer of 1944 is associated with the name of Marshal Malinovsky. Under his command the Soviet troops of the Second Ukrainian Front, assisted by the troops of the Third Ukrainian Front, trapped and wiped out a large German army group southwest of Kishinev. Rodion Malinovsky has worked hard ever since his early childhood in tsarist Russia. After leaving an elementary school, he had to work for a living, first as a farm hand, then as an errand boy to a shop. When the First World War broke out, Malinovsky, then a lad of sixteen, joined the army as a volunteer. Later he took part in the Civil War in the ranks of the Red Army. He commanded first a platoon, then a machine-gun squad, then a battalion. When the Red Army was placed on a peacetime footing, Malinovsky received the opportunity of rounding out his general education and acquiring a military education in a military academy. His rich experience and uncommon abilities quickly gained him promotion. At the beginning of the present war, Malinovsky was in command of an army corps.

Chief Artillery Marshal Nikolai Voronov represented the Headquarters of the Soviet Supreme Command in the Stalingrad operation,



which led to the annihilation of a large German army group. He was born in Leningrad in 1899. His father is still a high-school teacher. After leaving high school he studied in the Leningrad Artillery School, then graduated from the Higher Artillery School, and, lastly, the Military Academy. In the Soviet Union artillery is described as "the god of war." Chief Artillery Marshal Voronov is on the most friendly terms with this "god."

General Ivan Bagramyan was born in a village in Azerbaijan. His father was a poor Armenian peasant. In his childhood Ivan Bagramyan tended sheep. But this did not prevent him later from lecturing on military operations in the General Staff Academy, of which he is himself a graduate. Ivan Bagramyan began the present war with the rank of colonel. Now he is an army general famed as one of the most outstanding commanders of the Red Army.

If we were to relate the life stories of scores, hundreds or even thousands of Soviet officers, up to generals and marshals, they would all have one thing in common: They are all true sons of the people; they all come from the ranks of workers, peasants or intelligentsia.

#### THE COMMANDER'S WILL POWER—A KEY TO SUCCESS

The officers are the flower of the Red Army, its finest representatives. Soviet officers have gained their high positions by hard and persistent work, gallant actions and constant striving for improvement. They enjoy the affection and respect of the people, which regards them as its true sons.

The military honour of the Soviet officer consists above all in his ability to get the better of the enemy. The officer's honour is thus no abstract concept. The primary foundation of the Soviet officer's honour is his devotion to the cause of the people. The Soviet officer's honour is further based on his qualities as a commander, on his talents as a soldier, for unless he possesses such qualities he cannot perform his duty to the people.

The commander's will is the most important moral factor on the battlefield. It is his will that sets in motion and directs masses of men and material in the battle. "No matter how brilliant the plan," wrote the Russian military theorist General Dragomirov, "it may be utterly spoiled in execution, and execution lies in the realm of will." Strong will in a commander includes such qualities as self-possession, coolness, the ability to find his bearings in the most baffling and menacing situations. Soviet commanders have displayed outstanding examples of strong will, courage and resolve in action.

The following incident may serve as an illustration of the vast importance of the officer's will for the outcome of an engagement or an operation. It happened on the southern front. Lieutenant-

Colonel Safronov's unit, with tank and self-propelled gun support, breached the German defences on a narrow front and captured an important locality. The enemy beat a hasty retreat, and Lieutenant-Colonel Safronov immediately organized pursuit. In one day his unit, which became the spearhead of our wedge, advanced 17 kilometres in the face of enemy opposition. Safronov maintained contact with his superior by wireless. Towards evening the enemy, who had managed to bring up reinforcements from the neighbouring sectors, began to outflank Safronov's unit and seal it off in the bottleneck of the breach. At the same time the Germans, changing the direction of their blows, repeatedly attacked Safronov. Under those conditions it required the unbending will of a Soviet officer not only to beat off the enemy's attack, but to push forward. A liaison officer who managed to make his way to Lieutenant-Colonel Safronov advised him to fight his way back to join the main body. But Safronov's answer was: "I have achieved success and must exploit it. That is my duty. I am confident that the Germans are going to lose this game."

Safronov repelled several counter-attacks and wore down the enemy. Then he massed all his forces at one point, battered down the battle formation of the Germans and turned their flank again. The disconcerted enemy was forced to withdraw the screen that had just sealed off the initial breakthrough. The Soviet main forces made a dash forward, caught up with Safronov, and together with him smashed the enemy troops that opposed him and advanced another 15 kilometres.

Thus the will of a Soviet officer who held his ground in face of difficulties and did not waver at the crucial moment overcame all barriers and rendered invaluable service to the progress of the offensive.

### DISCIPLINE ABOVE ALL

Red Army men and officers are not separated from each other by a wall of caste distinctions and social enmity. They are all sons of the people, sons of their country. They all have the same interests and the same aims.

Soviet society is not divided by barriers of class or race. Distinctions or privileges based on class or property, race or nationality are alien to it. That is why the relation between superior and subordinate in the Soviet Union is not that of master and servant, but that of comrades, of equal participants in the struggle for a common cause, all performing their various duties. The Red Army officer and man may have been very close to each other in civilian life. They may have worked in the same factory or on the same collective farm; they may have studied together; worked together in government organisations, voted

together for members of Soviets of Working People's Deputies or been elected together.

The Soviet officer is the friend of his men. The following incident which took place on the First Baltic Front is characteristic of the relations between Red Army officers and men.

An artillery salvo shattered the calm before daybreak. The Soviet artillery laid down a barrage in preparation for an attack. A cloud of smoke rose over the enemy's positions. A hurricane of fire overtook the enemy. A Soviet company headed by Lieutenant Alexeyev went over the top. A bloody engagement ensued. Red Army man Bolotov worked tirelessly and deftly with bayonet and rifle-butt. Suddenly he caught sight of the lieutenant holding at bay three enemy soldiers who tried to set upon him. A fourth enemy soldier was stealing up from behind. Without a moment's thought, Bolotov hastened to the lieutenant and jumped in between him and his assailant. He had no chance of making another movement. The knife-thrust which was intended for the lieutenant bore down the Red Army man.

The attack continued and the enemy was wiped out. Next morning Lieutenant Alexeyev paid a visit to the hospital where Bolotov lay severely wounded.

"Is his condition dangerous?" he asked the surgeon.

"Very. Only a blood transfusion can save him."

"Have you got blood?"

"We have, only it's no good. He needs fresh blood."

"Please, take it from me."

Bolotov was saved. In his veins now flows the blood of Lieutenant Alexeyev—his company commander.

The entire Soviet army, from private to People's Commissar, is bound together by unbreakable ties of comradeship in arms. This spiritual kinship does not mean, however, that the Soviet officer overlooks a subordinate's delinquencies. Such an incorrect conception of democracy could only harm the army. The Soviet officer is a father to his men. He is concerned with their conditions of life, their food and recreation. At the same time it is an exacting, severe and, when necessary, ruthless leader who exercises his will with a firm hand. That is the model of a Red Army officer. By his entire behaviour he, as it were, tells the men: "We are comrades, of course, but discipline comes first."

From the first days of the present war Soviet officers have acquired a new awareness of the importance of military discipline. The life and destiny of a Soviet commander is inseparably bound up with his platoon or company. He personifies his unit, and the glory of his unit is a matter of honour to him. Many Soviet regiments, divisions and corps have gained world-wide fame. Their gallant commanders are widely known. They have put in a lot of work to

make their formations what they are. And it is their greatest reward that in the history of the Red Army their names are forever associated with the fame of the troops under their command.

Soldiers trained by the finest Soviet officers are proud to belong to their particular regiment, battalion, company. They hand down this pride to the recruits. Here is how old-timers of one famous regiment receive new arrivals. "Do you realise what regiment you've got into, chum?" severely explains an old, seasoned soldier to a newcomer. "Do you realise who our officers are? You must have read in the papers about Skulen, haven't you? Well, brother, that's us. And Dubossary, and Zatishye? That's us too. . . . Have you got an idea what kind of man our colonel is? No one could take Bugayevka, but he did. Three times he was wounded, but he did not leave the field. When it comes to carrying out any kind of manoeuvre, just you leave it to him—you can't go wrong with him! That's the kind of regiment you've got into."

New traditions have sprung up and are developing among Soviet officers. For one thing, they are becoming imbued with a feeling of profound respect for the name of their division or regiment. When General Peter Govorunenko, commander of the 375th Kharkov Division, which received its name for the capture of Kharkov in the summer of 1943, is asked about the officers of his division, his first reaction is in the form of a question, too: "Have you seen Pokatayev? There's a true Kharkovite for you."

And Captain Grigory Pokatayev, who commands a battalion, will tell you at once: "We owe it all to our general. . . . There's a true Kharkovite for you. We all learn from him to maintain the division's good name."

### HE IS LIKE A GOOD PIANIST

The Red Army has traversed a glorious road. Soviet generals have shown the German generals what the art of war means according to the Stalin school. Soviet officers have considerably deflated those who boasted the infallibility of the German military doctrine. In 1944 dozens of German divisional commanders on the southern front wandered about without their staffs, having lost direction of their troops and aware that Soviet generals and officers were imposing their will on them.

Soviet officers have shown German officers the real meaning of mobile tactics. The Prussian officer to whose ears, ever since childhood, the word: "Cannae" was like music, could never get out of Soviet encirclement. The encirclement of German troops and the annihilation of all who refuse to lay down their arms has become a

feature of the Red Army's operations. Soviet commanders have learned to combine sober calculation with risk.

Lieutenant-Colonel Logvinenko, one of thousands of Soviet officers who has trod the road to victory from Stalingrad to the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. and beyond, who crossed the Dnieper, the Bug, the Dniester, the Pruth, who has encircled and exterminated enemy forces, says: "In our job as officers, will and knowledge are the foundations for creative effort. Take a good pianist. When he sits at the piano he is not worried about his fingers hitting the proper keys—that is technique, he takes that for granted. What he concentrates on is the accomplishment of his creative idea. It is the same with a good officer. With the technique of his job at his fingers' tips, he can concentrate on the purely creative solution of the problem before him, without worrying over minor details. This creative development, creative imagination, is what distinguishes the Soviet officer."

And, indeed, if we analyse the activities of the best Soviet officers, we find that it is distinguished by this element of creative imagination. There is no cut and dried approach to the appraisal of a position, the mounting of an attack, or the distribution of artillery and reserves. Soviet officers display daring and imagination in their action. The enemy who is accustomed to stereotyped, cut and dried schemes, is invariably surprised.

Those are a few of the characteristics of the Soviet officer—a soldier who combines the merits of a patriot and champion of a just cause with the qualities of a skilful commander tempered in battle, who is abreast of modern military science and prepared to overcome any hardships, to carry out his orders under any conditions.

### *Chapter Five*

## CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK

### A CONCERT IN A DUGOUT

A PORTLY, IMPOSING MAN IN IMPECCABLE EVENING DRESS ANNOUNCED:

"The pride and beauty of the Russian ballet, Olga Lepeshinskaya, will dance for us."

Now we were watching this wonderful dancer; her supple figure in the close-fitting, golden tights glided before us to the strains of a waltz; her graceful movements held us enchanted, and we sat spell-bound, scarcely daring to breathe. . . .

When the dance was over, the spectators expressed their appreciation by a prolonged ovation. So eager were they to applaud that they sprang up from the ground and shifted their tommy-guns (which had

up to now lain on their knees) around to their shoulders. They had been sitting on the ground with tommy-guns on their knees because this concert was taking place in the front-line, a kilometre and a half from the German positions.

The scene was very typical. Concert parties from all over the Soviet Union might be met with everywhere at the front. Singers, actors, acrobats and violinists perform in the open air, in dug-outs, tents and on board ship. Not infrequently the concert had been held in a dug-out while German shells and mines were bursting close by, forming an original accompaniment to the arias from "Eugeniy Onegin." Soviet theatres and Soviet artists regard it as their duty as patriots to entertain the troops at the front.

Many theatres have their own regular concert parties. During the war Soviet actors have given over half a million concerts for the men at the front. Names well-known in the theatre world, Valeria Barsova, Alla Tarassova, Maxim Mikhailov, Nadezhda Obukhova, Elena Gogleba and the ballerinas Maria Semyonova and Olga Lepeshinskaya are among those of the frequent visitors to the army on active service.

It must not be thought that there is any falling off in artistic standards at the front. Very high demands are made upon artists in the Soviet Union and when it is a question of entertaining the army these demands are particularly exacting. Soviet artists and actors regard it as a matter of honour to give of their very best. From experienced masters of art of the theatre down to the youngest beginners all have been anxious to get to the front, to make their own contribution, through their art, to the defeat of the enemy.

The name of Ostuzhev of the Moscow Maly Theatre is well-known in the world of the drama. He is one of the oldest and most gifted actors on the Russian stage. His Othello will always have its place in the history of the theatre. During the last few years he has not appeared very often; he is over 70. He is practically stone-deaf, but by the power of his gifts and the fire that still glows in his heart, this great actor overcomes this serious physical defect and continues to evoke the admiration of his audiences. Every appearance of his on the stage in the capital is regarded as a great occasion.

In spite of his advanced age, Ostuzhev went to the front with a concert party. In the few months that he spent there, he gave his Othello speeches dozens of times. Two trucks placed side by side served as a stage; the scenery was the Russian fields and woods that have become the theatre of war.

On his return to Moscow he told the press:

"It is a long time since I have felt such emotion and such pleasure as during my appearance at the front for the glorious defenders of our Soviet country!"

## WHEN THE GUNS SPEAK

Mikhail Gromov, a private in the 3rd Stalingrad Guards' Corps, was interested in France's past and present. He wanted to hear from the lips of an authority on the subject the story of the heroic French people. So Mikhail Gromov went to a lecture. The lecturer who addressed him and his comrades was a prominent Soviet scholar, who had spent a long time in France and specialised in the study of her history. In his extremely interesting and penetrating lecture the soldiers found the answer to all the questions that interested them.

The lecture itself took place in one of the Red Army units on active service. Gun barrels were visible between the trees that surrounded the clearing that served as a lecture hall.

This lecture, however, was only one of many available—typical of the many-sided cultural and educational work conducted on a wide scale which is one of the most striking features of the Red Army.

Consider for instance this list:

Monday: Paper on Suvorov, the great Russian military leader.

Tuesday: A new film—*Russian People*.

Wednesday: Lecture on Soviet industry during the war.

It reads like the program of a club in some town in the rear. Actually, these are extracts from the diary of a Red Army officer, Sidorenko, in the summer of 1944 when his regiment was stationed on one of the western sectors of the Soviet-German front. They are part of the time-table of cultural training in his regiment.

The interests of the men in the Red Army are not confined to the narrow range of strictly military questions. While they are on active service, they continue to take a keen interest in scientific, artistic and cultural matters. And while they are on active service, which brings them daily face to face with death, they retain their love of knowledge and capacity for enjoying life, they remain the same Soviet people to whom everything that embellishes and advances life is infinitely dear.

The whole world has heard of the epic of Stalingrad. The fighting demanded from the Soviet troops the utmost concentration of moral and physical force. Nevertheless it often happened that in the Stalingrad trenches and dug-outs, in the cellars of houses talks were given on a wide range of subjects, such as the country's past, the work of Soviet scientists, conditions on the home front. Even in Stalingrad, the tuneful, pensive Russian song did not desert the Soviet soldiers when there was a lull in the fighting.

Cultural and educational work among the Soviet troops is never dropped, no matter what the conditions may be. If it is out of the question to give a lecture before a large audience, short talks are

given to small groups on the battlefield or in the trenches. If actors cannot be brought there, the Red Army men provide their own talent and the entertainment takes the form of songs, tempestuous dances, and marvellous acrobatics.

In one way or another, by some means or other, everything possible has been done to lighten the grim toil of warfare, to supply the Red Army men's cultural needs, help them to fight more effectively on the battlefield and advance more speedily along the road to victory.

### THE RED ARMY MAN'S FRIEND

Thousands of newspapers with a circulation of many million copies are published in the Red Army. In addition to the central war press there are front line papers, army papers and divisional papers. These enjoy an unparalleled popularity.

Thousands of copies of the central papers, *Pravda*, *Izvestia* and *Red Star* are sent to the front daily by train, plane and car. Besides papers, books on every subject, from fiction to science, are sent.

To get an idea of the thoroughness with which Soviet soldiers' and officers' cultural needs are supplied, it is sufficient to point out that in three years of war the front received more than 300 million copies of books, about 300 million leaflets; of these, 6 million books and about 40 million leaflets were in the languages of the various nationalities in the Soviet Union: hundreds of millions of copies of the central news papers and dozens of millions of copies of civil and military magazines were also sent.

It has become a rule in the Red Army for papers and books to be sent to the forward positions together with ammunition.

Imagine a vast field, seamed by trenches. This is the rifle regiment's line. From time to time the Germans are shelling the Soviet positions. Mines fall with a hiss, followed by a hollow explosion. While shells are coming over from the nearby wood, a man with a haversack appears on the scene. Death stalks him at every step. But he knows that his comrades are waiting for him. Sometimes he flops to the ground and crawls for a stretch, sometimes he takes the most dangerous areas at a rush, but eventually he reaches the trenches, slips off his load and distributes it among the men. It is to-day's number of the local Red Army paper.

Each Red Army paper may be said to be its reader's friend in the fullest sense of the word. It is printed here on the spot, in a zone which may very likely be under not only artillery but also trench-mortar fire. The printing press is set up on lorries and accompanies the troops everywhere. Consequently, the editorial office has a thorough knowledge of the Red Army men's life and is in a position to reflect it



and respond at once to burning questions of the day in the division and on that particular sector.

Let us take a look at an ordinary issue of one of the innumerable Red Army papers—*Our Country's Banner*.

This opens with an editorial on the gallant conduct of Red Army man Romanchenko, who was the first to break through to the German positions during an attack and emerge the victor from a skirmish with four of the enemy. The commander awarded him a military order. A photograph of Romanchenko accompanies the article. The paper also contains items about the conduct of other soldiers who distinguished themselves in the last battle. There is a short article by an experienced officer on the best methods of combating enemy tanks. Another article describes new military ruses resorted to by the Germans.

Very full information is given about the latest and most outstanding events at home and abroad. In addition to this, the paper prints a letter from a Red Army man's mother, Olga Petrakova, addressed to her son's commander. It is a reply to the commander's own letter in which he informed her of the notable gallantry of Ivan Petrakov. The mother acknowledges the letter with thanks, tells the commander about her successes at the works where she is employed, and asks him to let her son know that he has her blessing in his new exploits in the name of victory.

This issue carries many letters from readers; mention is made of an excellent barber whose work is highly appreciated by the men; of delays in the post; and of a concert in one of the battalions. The words of a new song are given and the lighter side of army life is represented by a humorous corner.

This is an average number. There are thousands of these papers in the Red Army. Typical titles are *The Country's Defender*, *For Our Victory*, *The Wings of the Soviets*, *The Fighting Red Army*, *For the Enemy's Defeat*, *The Red Banner*, *The Soldier-Liberator*, *Victory's Banner*, *The Fire-Thrust*.

The Red Army is multi-national; the sons of all the nationalities in the Soviet Union are fighting in its ranks, shoulder to shoulder as brothers. The majority of them have mastered Russian well, but naturally they show a preference for their own languages. Taking this into consideration, many Red Army papers are published in other languages—Ukrainian, Belorussian, Kazakh, Latvian, Uzbek, Lithuanian, Tatar, Esthonian, Tagjik and so on.

Red Army men also receive a fine selection of magazines including the military journals published in the army. Many of these deal with special military questions; others are of a general political nature, others again literary or humorous.

The most popular is the fiction-magazine called *The Red Army*

man, which is excellently produced. Leading Soviet writers contribute to it and its contents are of a high standard of interest.

Contents of a recent number included an article by a member of the Academy of Sciences on new discoveries; an historical sketch of one of the outstanding figures of the past; a survey of international affairs; poetry; two war stories and a story called *First Love*; an adventure serial; and a satirical sketch. It also contained all kinds of information, crossword puzzles and competitions. It was illustrated by many photographs, drawings and caricatures.

### ARMY HUMOUR

Nowhere is a good joke so highly appreciated as at the front; nowhere perhaps is it so urgently needed.

A sense of humour is common to all Soviet soldiers. The bravest and staunchest never fail to find, even in the most trying circumstances, something that provides material for a joke to lighten the spirits and chase away weariness and depression.

In this respect the Red Army press endeavours to satisfy its readers. Every paper has its regular humorous section, cartoon and satirical features.

Here are two recently published in the *Red Fighter*:

"What were the Russian forces that beat you?" a German colonel asks his subordinate.

"I couldn't tell you, Herr Colonel, I didn't look back."

Another German colonel sent for an officer in order to give him a stern warning:

"Ober-leutnant Kurt Kepke, I hear you are spreading unfounded rumours that our regiment is suffering heavy losses!"

"But Herr Colonel, I was told about them only to-day by the soldiers of the 2nd Battalion."

"Another lie! How could you hear that to-day from a soldier of the 2nd Battalion, when it was completely wiped out yesterday by the Russians."

Not only does the Red armyman hate the enemy whose baseness and savagery has exceeded even the darkest pages of history; he also despises him. The utter falseness of German propaganda, the moral baseness of German soldiers and officers, their dishonesty, their cowardliness and all their various other repellent characteristics evoke disgust in the Soviet soldier.

In this respect, also the Red Army press and humorous magazines give graphic expression to their readers' feelings.

## A BLOOD-STAINED BOOK

Important as is the part played by newspapers and magazines in the Soviet soldiers' life, that played by books is even more important.

Among the war relics in the Central Soviet Army-and-Navy museum, there is a copy of one of the most popular books in the U.S.S.R., Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered*. It lies open at a page that is stained with blood, and the edges of the binding are scorched. Above it is a portrait of a sailor, Grigorii Kuropyatnikov, one of the defenders of Sevastopol. The book is red with his blood. He had carried the book about with him since the first days of the war; reading it over and over again until it seemed to have become part of his own life. It was his inseparable companion, amid all the varied experiences of war. When an enemy bullet wounded this young sailor who had won the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for his gallantry, his beloved book shared his fate.

Grigorii Kuropyatnikov was no exception; Red Army men have a taste for wise, sincere, well-written books. They treasure them and read them over and over again, even when circumstances are far from conducive to a reading mood.

On one occasion it happened that the battalion commanded by Captain Akimov, which had advanced far ahead and entrenched itself on the line it had taken, was cut off from the main body. Contact was maintained by air. Aircraft dropped regular supplies of everything necessary for living and fighting—at least that was what the regimental quartermaster thought, the soldiers thought otherwise.

During a radio-conversation on the fourth day, Captain Akimov informed his Commanding Officer: "We have a complaint to make against you." "What's up now?" his superior demanded. "You forgot about us, you didn't send us a single book, and we need them so badly!"

That same day a bundle of books was dropped on the battalion by plane.

Every division and regiment has its library and from time to time its stocks is increased. There are also special travelling libraries along the front line. The staffs of these libraries advise the men about books, telling them which they think they will like and which are most worth while reading.

Reading from favourite books are very popular at the front. In their spare time the men squat around in a circle while one of them or the officer in charge of cultural and educational work, reads aloud—it may be a novel or, not infrequently, poetry.

## THE SOLDIERS' OWN ENTERTAINMENTS

An important feature of the Red Army soldier's life is its essentially social nature. The habits of social activity common to all Soviet people are very highly developed in Red Army men, and do much to relieve and brighten life at the front. One of the ways in which this social spirit manifests itself is in the army's own amateur dramatic and musical circles. Whenever possible their performances are carefully rehearsed and many of them are up to professional level. The officers help the men in every way, obtain the necessary instruments for them, and help to get them expert advice and coaching if required. Generally each company owns several musical instruments.

Here is a scene typical of any front.

The din of battle has died away and the company is enjoying a brief respite. Immediately, a tune is struck up on the accordion, which unfailingly accompanies the men on all their campaigns. Then the best dancer appears in the middle of the ring formed by the men, and, with a toss of his head, dashes into a lively dance.

The soldiers' faces, seared by the heat of battle, soften into a smile. They watch their comrade with admiration and applaud vigorously. At moments like these they feel very keenly the joy of living.

## OFFICERS AS EDUCATORS OF THEIR MEN

All cultural and educational work and also the political training of soldiers and officers of the Red Army are in the hands of a special staff. Each formation has a political department; each regiment and battalion has an assistant-commander for political work. The Chief Political Administration of the Red Army directs their activities, and at the head of this stands Colonel-General Shcherbakov, one of the assistants of the People's Commissar of Defence, Marshal Stalin.

The educational officers who work in the political departments of the Red Army endeavour to satisfy the men's cultural needs and brighten the hard life they live at the front. At the same time, while they are engaged on the men's political education, they direct their efforts at developing in every soldier a clear realisation of the great and noble aims of the struggle against the German fascist invaders. The army's cultural and educational work is aimed at tempering the soldier's spirit and developing in each man the qualities that ensure victory in battle. "Men are not born heroes, they become heroes," Soviet people say. One of the most important objects of the Red Army's cultural and educational work is to make every soldier capable of heroism.

This aim is achieved by explaining the nature of the Soviet Union's

patriotic war against Hitlerite Germany, by describing exploits performed in battle against the Nazis and by widely popularising the gallant conduct of Red Army men who distinguish themselves in battle. As soon as a soldier has displayed exceptional bravery or military ingenuity, or performed some outstanding exploit, this is made known to all the soldiers and officers, reported in the army newspapers and discussed during special talks. The soldiers take their best comrades as their example and learn from them. The achievements of the foremost fighters inspire them with a noble spirit of emulation, and help them to push on to victory with still greater determination.

No matter how powerful the influence of papers or books may be, they cannot entirely take the place of the living word, of a talk with a clever man with knowledge and experience, such men as those who form the personnel of the Red Army's political department. As a rule, these are all men with a university education and very wide political and cultural outlook. Before the war many were scientific workers or teachers.

They are always welcome guests in any unit. The troops know that they can get a satisfactory answer to any question that interests them. The commander takes the place of a father to his men and looks after their needs, but time does not always permit him to observe and go deeply into everything with them. And this is where the officer engaged in cultural and educational work comes to the aid of both commander and soldier.

The Red Army men turn to him for advice, sometimes on the most intimate personal questions. The following incident will serve as an illustration. Young Yaroslav Petukhov's fiancée took offence at a remark he made, as a joke, in one of his letters. She could think of nothing better to do than break off the correspondence, although she had known Yaroslav for many years and, as far as one could judge, really loved him.

One does not need to be an expert psychologist to understand the effect this had on Petukhov's mood. The officer responsible for cultural and educational work in this battalion noticed that Yaroslav had suddenly lost his usual good spirits, and became moody and dejected. The officer watched his opportunity for a private talk with him and asked him sympathetically what had happened and if anything could be done to help him.

Somewhat embarrassed, Petukhov recounted all that had happened and concluded, with a gesture of despair:

"It's all up with me now! I've lost Nina!"

The officer did not attempt to talk him round, but wrote to his fiancée without delay, without of course letting Petukhov know anything about this.

The officer's tactful letter saved the situation. A week later two letters arrived at the same time from Nina; one was for Goreyev, the officer, the other for Yaroslav Petukhov. Goreyev's was brief but to the point:

*"Dear Comrade Goreyev. I am heartily ashamed of myself, and very, very grateful to you. You have helped me like a father. And I was so worried: I thought I had lost Yaroslav. . . . Many thanks."*

It has become a rule in the Red Army that if anything goes wrong with a soldier, if he has any trouble or is worried about family matters, he turns first of all to the officer who represents the political department.

The officers are assisted in their cultural and educational work by those soldiers who are better informed and better educated than the others, and above all, by the Communists and Komsomols—the members of the Young Communist League.

#### COMMUNISTS AND KOMSOMOLS

In every regiment and battalion in the Red Army there are Communist organisations which unite all members of the Communist Party, whether they are officers or privates. The part that these organisations play in the life of the Soviet troops is a very vital one. They form the kernel of the battalion and regiment, and serve as a firm support for the commander at critical moments. The rest of the soldiers learn from them, and take them as examples of fearlessness, staunchness and stubbornness in battle.

During the Civil War instructions were issued to the Communist organisations of the Red Army units. These instructions required of every Communist that he should "set an example of supreme courage and staunchness in battle, patience and endurance in all the difficulties and privations of the conditions of the campaign. In cases where volunteers are required for dangerous undertakings, such as reconnaissance in the enemy rear, the organisation of shock groups and so on, they should offer themselves for the most dangerous missions." These are the instructions followed by the Communists in the Red Army to-day. They bear in mind the words with which Lenin defined the Communist's role in battle, "My place is ahead of the rest."

On one occasion when an enemy counter-attack was at its height, ammunition gave out among the Red Army men of the landing-party that held a small bridgehead on the right bank of the river.

The Germans were only 20 or 30 metres from Soviet trenches. At this critical moment Pavel Kruchnikov, a Communist soldier, rose to his full height and with a shout of "For the Motherland," made a rush at the enemy. The rest followed him in a bayonet charge. The handful of Red Army men drove the Nazis back, burst into their

trenches and captured ammunition with which they repelled all German counter-attacks and held the bridgehead.

In another sector Krivosheyev, a Communist who was second-in-command of a platoon, took command when he saw that his superior officer was wounded and no longer able to carry on. Under Krivosheyev's command the platoon killed 50 Germans and successfully accomplished its assignment.

Nikolai Shandura, a Communist private, led the charge by which his unit stormed a village. In this engagement he accounted for five Germans.

There are innumerable instances like these. Wherever the danger is greatest, wherever the outcome of the battle is decided, Communists are to be found, as a rule, ahead of the rest. The Communists are not only the finest of the best, the bravest of the brave; at the same time they take a prominent part in cultural and educational work and help their comrades in every possible way.

Here are some practical examples of the personal influence of Communist party members in the ranks:

While Private Erokhin was in hospital, wounded, he lived over again every stage of his life at the front and finally resolved to write a letter to his company's Party organisation as follows: "Comrade Party organiser, and all the Party comrades, please thank the Communist, Sergeant Yakimov, for me, thank him and shake hands with him in good soldier-fashion. For he has done a great deal for me, and I shall never forget him. We were together right from our first days of trench life, we fought together, we lived in the same dug-out, we slept side by side, we shared our joys and sorrows like brothers. Yakimov helped me to become a first-rate machine-gunner. He helped me, a young inexperienced soldier, to gain a right understanding of many things in life. No matter what question you took to him, he could always explain it. Yakimov was more than a friend to me; I looked up to him, learned from him, tried to follow his example everywhere and to keep up with him and not lag behind."

For a long time Peter Galushko could not get used to it at the front. He turned pale and became bewildered during heavy bombardments. His comrade, Efim Shchedry, a Communist, noticed his predicament, and had a talk with him.

"They say a bullet fears a brave man and it seeks a coward," Efim began, and went on to tell the young soldier how he had taught himself to get used to the front and always to keep himself in hand. He explained that the more confident and cool a man was, the less danger he was in and the better he would fight.

Efim Shchedry himself was an able, brave and enterprising soldier, as befits a Communist. He had fought at Stalingrad and has personally

accounted for over a hundred Germans. Naturally, all this gave weight to his words. But Efim did not stop at this; he asked the platoon commander to give him an opportunity of fighting alongside Galushko. On the battlefield he encouraged Galushko by his own example and taught him to fight coolly, confidently and with precision. As a result Galushko soon overcame his weakness, grew accustomed to his surroundings and became a first-class soldier.

The Komsomols help the Communists and carry on similar work. There is a Komsomol organisation—Communist League of Soviet Youth—in every company and battalion. The soldiers who belong to it regard it as a matter of honour to fight heroically and set an example to the rest. The Komsomols are the best representatives of Soviet youth. Among them there are many gallant fighters whose fame has spread far beyond the bounds of the Soviet Union.

One example is sniper Pchelintsov, who was awarded the Gold Star of a Hero of the Soviet Union. Pchelintsov was a student who left his books to join the army and distinguished himself by a number of gallant exploits during the defence of Leningrad. He was one of the party of students who visited the United States during the war.

Divochkin, a Komsomol gunner, emerged the victor of a 12-hour battle with several German tanks. All his comrades were wounded, but Divochkin carried on, taking the place of a whole crew.

When the path of his platoon was blocked by a German machine-gunner, Private Nikonov risked his life without a moment's hesitation and flung himself at the gun. He was wounded, but he had cleared the way for his platoon.

By their gallant example the Komsomols help to train and inspire young soldiers; they give them friendly advice, show them how best to use their weapons and conduct themselves under fire.

When the guns are silent, Communists and Komsomols are the first to organise recreation and rest. They are good comrades, who show consideration for each man's individual idiosyncracies. They can cheer a tired soldier with a word of sympathy, and chase away the blues with a joke. The officers in charge of cultural and educational work assign them and the Communists special tasks such as giving talks on various subjects—the situation at the fronts, the exploits of men who have distinguished themselves in action; the situation on the home front; they also give readings from newspapers and books.

In battle and in their free time the soldiers of the Soviet army are always aware that they are members of one huge united family. The soul of that family is—the Communists and Komsomols.

"My company is my home," Red Army men say. In this home everything possible in wartime is done to satisfy the physical and



spiritual needs of the soldiers, to teach every one of them how to fight ably and coolly in order to defeat the enemy and preserve himself for better times.

### *Chapter Six*

## THE ARMY AND THE PEOPLE

### SOURCES OF STRENGTH

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RED ARMY ARE WELL KNOWN. IT HAS NOT only proved capable of withstanding the onslaught of a German war machine that swept aside everything that stood in its path, but it has smashed that machine and laid the foundations of the victory of the United Nations. The Army of the Soviet people emerged victorious from its unparalleled duel with the main fighting forces of Hitlerite predatory imperialism together with the troops of Italy, Rumania, Hungary, Finland and of General Franco who were fighting on the side of Germany. The many countries that Hitler had occupied were all working for the Germans; this, however, did not save them from being defeated by the Red Army.

The war has proved that the Red Army is a tremendous fighting force. As Marshal Stalin said, "The Red Army has become a most powerful modern army tempered in the course of the war." The stringency of Marshal Stalin's demands and the strictness and accuracy of his assessments are well known.

What are the miraculous sources from which the Red Army obtains this titanic strength? In what does the secret of its successes lie?

Foreign commentators, in their attempts to answer this question, frequently make the most original suggestions. Some suggest that the Red Army's victories are due to the numerical superiority of the Soviet forces. Others explain the victories as being due either to the traditional bravery of the Russian soldier or to the fact that the U.S.S.R. possesses inexhaustible natural resources. Such explanations greatly simplify the question and reduce it to narrow limits; they cannot be deemed satisfactory answers.

During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 the Russian Army was bigger than the Japanese, the Russian soldier fought as bravely and stubbornly as ever, and Russia possessed the same natural resources as she does at present. Nevertheless, the tsarist government lost the war.

In the world war of 1914-1918 Russia enjoyed the same advantages over Germany as she had over Japan in 1904. The tsarist government

however, proved bankrupt in this war. The many million gallant soldiers of the Russian army were left without arms, without ammunition or food.

It is, therefore, not merely a matter of the traditional courage of the Russian soldier and the natural riches of Russia. In order to understand why the Red Army has become the most powerful and finely tempered modern army a number of factors must be taken into consideration.

The Soviet Union is the world's largest country contained within one single, continuous stretch of territory. From north to south it extends for 4,500 kilometres and from east to west for 11,000 kilometres. An express train from Moscow to Vladivostok on the shores of the Pacific, travels for 240 hours—ten days and nights.

The area of the Soviet Union is some 22 million square kilometres. In other words the Soviet Union occupies one sixth of the world's habitable dry land surface.

The Soviet Union is rich in minerals of all kinds—oil, coal, iron, peat, shale, silver, gold, platinum, wolfram, manganese and precious stones. These minerals which have been surveyed and exploited under Soviet power form but a small part of the natural resources of the country.

There are extensive forests in the U.S.S.R. which provide excellent building material and raw material for a number of industries. The cultivated areas, especially in the central and southern regions of the Soviet Union are famous for their bumper harvests of rye, wheat and other grain-crops, also for their industrial crops, amongst the latter the rubber-bearing kok-sagyz. In the sub-tropical regions of the south there are tea and cotton plantations, rice fields and orchards of oranges and lemons that have been planted in Soviet times.

A population of 193 millions puts the Soviet Union third place in the world; only two other single countries having a greater population.

The fauna of this huge country is varied in the extreme and includes almost all the known wild and domestic animals, fish, amphibia and birds.

The material and man-power resources of the Soviet Union, therefore, are very great indeed. It must be remembered, however, that it is not the resources themselves that are the deciding factor, but the ability to use them. Deposits of iron ore are not tanks, oil deposits are not aviation spirit and coal-seams are not ammunition. If this potential cannot be converted into reality, the riches themselves are worth nothing.

It is only the Soviet power, the Soviet Socialist State, that has proved capable of making extensive use of Russia's riches.

The workers and peasants knew that Russia was a rich country.

They also knew that, despite her riches, Russia was a backward country, backward economically, politically and culturally.

“You are squalid, you are rich,  
You are mighty, you are weak,  
Oh! Mother Russia.”

wrote the poet Nekrasov of the old pre-revolutionary Russia.

Taking advantage of this weakness which arose from her backwardness, Russia's foreign enemies made frequent attacks on her. “You are rich,” they said as they attacked, “therefore we can live at your expense: You are squalid and weak, therefore we may strike and plunder without fear of punishment.”

The tsarist government proved incapable of making Russia the mighty country which her resources permitted. In 1917, the tsarist government, the pre-revolutionary regime, brought the country to the brink of economic disintegration and ruin. It is sufficient merely to mention the fact that by this time three quarters of the country's blast furnaces had been extinguished, the whole railway system was paralysed, and the urban population and the army were starving.

The Russian workers and peasants could not reconcile themselves to the fact that their country was falling into ruin. They united around Lenin and Stalin, supported the Bolshevik Party which showed them the way out of the deadlock—that of taking the fate of the country into their own hands and setting up their own workers' and peasants' Soviet power. The Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies became the only, all-embracing power in the country.

The years of Russia's development under the guidance of Soviet power were years of economic and cultural progress unparalleled in the history of the country. During the twenty-seven years that have elapsed since the October Revolution Russia has been completely transformed. Russia has become the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a first-class industrial power, a mighty state capable of ensuring the well-being of all its citizens and of defending her liberty and independence against the inroads of any enemy.

The victories gained by Soviet power are reflected and recorded in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. which the Soviet people in all justice call the Stalin Constitution. The Constitution states that in the U.S.S.R. there is no exploitation of man by man, every citizen of the U.S.S.R. irrespective of his social position and past activity, has the right to work, to enjoy leisure, to receive an education and the right to maintenance in the event of illness or old age. The Soviet Constitution is based on the equality of all nations and races. This means that all nations and races, irrespective of their past and present position, irrespective of their strength or weakness, have equal rights

in all spheres of economic, state and cultural life. The ruling bodies of the Soviet State are organised in accordance with this principle. The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. consists of two chambers: the Soviet of the Union which is elected on the basis of one deputy to every 300,000 electors and the Soviet of Nationalities which is elected by the Union (Constituent) and Autonomous Republics, the Autonomous Regions and National Territories with 25 deputies from each Union Republic, 11 deputies from each Autonomous Republic, 5 deputies from each Autonomous Region and 1 deputy from each National Territory.

Soviet power with its planned socialist system of national economy has enabled the peoples of the Soviet Union to build up a powerful industry and a mighty collective farm agriculture in a short space of time.

The U.S.S.R. possesses a large number of powerful industrial enterprises, electric power stations, mines, blast furnaces, etc. Industry has grown to a very considerable degree in Siberia and the Urals. Despite the loss of the important industrial regions which the Germans occupied in 1941, Soviet industry has been able to maintain a sufficient supply of arms and ammunition for the Red Army.

In distant Siberia and the Urals, thousands of kilometres from the front, countless factories equipped according to the last word of modern technology are working day and night. By 1940 the output of the heavy industries of the Soviet Union as a whole was 10.9 times that of 1913, while the industrial output of the Kazakh Soviet Republic was 22.2 times greater, that of the Armenian Soviet Republic 22.3 times greater, that of the Georgian Republic 26.4 times greater, that of the Kirghiz Republic 160 times greater and that of the Tadjik Republic 242 times greater than in 1913. Soviet power, therefore, has abolished the economic backwardness of the non-Russian republics which tsarism retained as colonies.

Great reforms were also made in the sphere of agriculture. Farming in pre-revolutionary Russia was on a small scale and was backward and unproductive. The majority of the peasants led a poverty-stricken existence. To-day the whole peasantry is united in the collective farms which are able to pay well for the labour of their members and at the same time have a high level of production.

The collective farm or artel (co-operative), as it is also called, is a voluntary organisation. "The working peasantry of the village," says the first Article of the Collective Farm Statute, "are voluntarily united in the agricultural artel in order, with commonly owned means of production and the organised labour of all the members, to build up the collective farm and ensure a complete victory over want and ignorance, over the backwardness of small individual farms, to make

labour more productive and in this way to ensure a better life for the collective farmers."

On forming the collective farm all members first of all join up the plots of land which they own. All the hedges and boundaries which divided them are removed and a single soil area is formed for the collective use of the artel. This land, which is the property of the whole people, the property of the state, is handed over to the artel for its use in perpetuity. Other things that are "collectivised" in the artel in addition to land are draught cattle, farm implements, stocks of seed, fodder in quantities required to maintain the artel's animals and all shops and installations for the manufacture of farm produce which formerly belonged to the members before they joined the collective.

The artel is an excellent combination of the public and private requirements of its members. In addition to the common property of the collective farmers, each collective farmer retains private property for his own use. Every member of the artel is entitled to a plot of land around his house for use as a vegetable garden, orchard or vineyard. The collective farmer's house, a certain number of cattle and poultry, the buildings necessary to house them and small farm utensils necessary to work his plot of land remain the private property of the collective farmer.

The artel's business is conducted by the general meeting of the members which is the ruling body of the farm. Executive power is in the hands of the Board of Management elected by the collective farmers.

The simple act of pooling farm implements and draught animals for the co-operative tilling of the soil was in itself an important factor in the intensification of agricultural production. The most important thing in organising large-scale farming, however, was the possibility it gave for the extensive employment of machinery. For the purpose of mechanising farming processes the state organised special machine-tractor stations which contract for the heaviest work on the collective farms.

Soviet agriculture has been mechanised to a very large extent. In 1940, 500,000 tractors and 150,000 combine harvesters were working in Soviet fields. Thanks to the collective farm system the U.S.S.R. was able to master the situation created by the German occupation of such rich grain areas as the Ukraine, the Don and the Kuban and to find additional areas for cultivation. In pre-war days the Soviet collective farms produced almost 8,000 million poods of grain a year.

Thanks to the establishment of Soviet power, therefore, the peoples of the Soviet Union have been able to build up a socialist society, large-scale industry and a modern farm system with a high productivity. All this has served to make the Soviet Union a powerful state and provided the Red Army with a strong hinterland, the material basis

for the victories of Soviet arms. To this must be added the fact that whatever is produced in the factories and on the farms for the use of the Red Army is delivered in full and on time. This is achieved by the clock-work smoothness of the work of all forms of transport, first and foremost of the railways. Furthermore, the absence of the private contractor supplying the army prevents robbery, misappropriation and other forms of commissariat swindles. The state supplies the Red Army through army base units established for the purpose.

In addition to tremendous material wealth the Soviet Union has also accumulated strong moral capital.

The Soviet working class is a new class, a class which knows that it is working for itself, for all the riches of the Soviet state which the workers have built up are employed for the improvement of the living conditions of the people.

The Soviet collective farm peasantry are peasantry of a new type amongst whom are many agronomists, teachers, tractor-drivers, combine-operators, doctors and others. The cultural standard of the Soviet rural areas is immeasurably higher than was formerly the case. The collective farm peasantry make full use of modern farming technique and all the achievements of agricultural science.

The abolition of national inequality united all the peoples of the Soviet Union irrespective of their nationality or race, or their religious persuasion. All the peoples of the U.S.S.R. are represented in the Red Army and are fighting against the German invaders. A number of nationalities were not allowed to enlist in the tsarist army, such as Turcomans, Uzbeks and others. Under Soviet power all of them, as equals amongst equals, are fighting for their country. Many of them are now high ranking officers.

All the peoples of the Soviet Union are showing courage and fortitude in the war against the Germans. On the first of August 1944 there were 5,241 heroes of the Soviet Union in the Red Army made up of 3,322 Russians, 816 Ukrainians, 93 Tatars, 90 Belorussians, 53 Kazakhs, 48 Jews, 36 Uzbeks, 36 Georgians, 31 Armenians, 27 Bashkirs, 27 Mordvinians, 17 Azerbaijanians, 14 Ossetians, 9 Poles, 7 Tadjiks, 6 Estonians, 4 Karelians, 3 Letts, etc.

Soviet power, its historic victories in the spheres of economics, culture and the moral consolidation of the Soviet people—these are sources of the mighty strength of the Red Army. Many facts could be mentioned as evidence of the strength and durability of the Soviet state and its popularity amongst the masses of the Soviet people. We will mention only a few.

It is well known that in the occupied Soviet districts the Nazis did everything possible to abolish Soviet power and drive Soviet ideas out of the peoples consciousness. They were unsuccessful and the

Soviet system continued to exist in the German occupied districts. Soviet power was based on the partisan movement which was usually headed by the leaders of the local Soviet organisations. The partisan columns had their own tribunals who, in the name of Soviet power, passed sentence on the German butchers and their associates, and executed the sentences. Behind the German lines Soviet organisations continued to exist; they issued instructions which were faithfully fulfilled by the local people. The most striking evidence of this is the fact that every year organs of Soviet power gathered together young men due for mobilisation and sent them in secret across the front line for service in the Red Army.

The local organs of Soviet power issued instructions to the peasants telling them how much land to sow, how to hide the grain from the Germans, where to hide it, etc. Despite everything Soviet power lived on!

The collective farm system proved just as durable. At first the Germans announced that the collective farms in the occupied areas would be disbanded and that every peasant could take his share of the collective farm land as his own. The Nazis expected the Soviet peasants to take this bait and reject the collective farm system. Again they were mistaken.

The Soviet peasantry remained true to the collective farm system because experience had shown them that this system of farming furthers their own interests. The collective farmers sent everything possible away into the interior of the country as the Germans approached their districts. They gave their grain to the state and they drove off their cattle. Later, when the occupied regions were liberated from the Germans the farmers' cattle were returned together with any offspring.

The collective farmers in the occupied regions hid their grain and sabotaged all deliveries required by the Germans. The peasants did everything they could to help their own Soviet authorities, although they were threatened with death for this. When beleaguered Leningrad was starving the collective farmers of the occupied districts of the Leningrad Region collected grain for the city, loaded it on 200 carts and drove them through the front line into the city.

These are but a few instances; many more like them could be cited. These facts show that it is the Soviet system which has made possible the victories of the Red Army. The facts show that the Soviet state has successfully weathered all the trials of war. "There can be no doubt," said Stalin, "that the Soviet state will emerge from the war stronger and more powerful."

The picture would not be complete without mention of the Bolshevik Communist Party, the vanguard of the working people of the Soviet Union in their struggle for the development and strengthening of Soviet power and the might of the country. In war-time the Communist

Party has appeared before the people as the inspirer and organiser of the struggle of the whole people against the fascist invaders. The authority which the Communist Party enjoys amongst the Soviet people may be judged by the fact that in the one month of August, 1942, when the Germans were approaching Stalingrad, deep in the interior of the U.S.S.R., 132,000 people joined the Communist Party.

Here the fact should be stressed that membership of the Communist Party does not bring Soviet people any privileges or material advantage. On the contrary, the party makes great demands of its members who have many obligations to fulfil. If any shortcomings are discovered in work anywhere it is the Communists who are first and foremost held responsible. More is demanded of them than of non-party workers.

In the army at the front the Communists are always in the thickest of the fight. They are first to sacrifice themselves when the interests of the country and the people demand it. If anybody wishes to join the party he not only has to be acquainted with the programme and regulations, but must show that he is worthy to be a member of the party. "If you are fearless, if you grudge nothing to obtain victory over the enemy, you can become a Communist," is the way the question is put. It is not unusual for soldiers to submit applications for membership to the party before they go into battle. Here is a copy of one of these applications:

"To the Battalion Party Organisation.

From Private Vladimir Kholodenko.

#### APPLICATION

" Since the war began I have been wounded three times and have been awarded two orders. All the time I have fought with the idea in mind that I will join the ranks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). As I again go into battle I wish to state, comrades, that I will fight against the Hitlerite vipers like a real Bolshevik, using bullet and butt, and if they kill me then believe that Vladimir Kholodenko died like a Communist, and if I return victorious then please accept me as a candidate for membership of the party whose teachings I have been following since my boyhood."

For the Soviet soldier, personal well-being and personal happiness are inseparable from the happiness of the Soviet people as a whole and the prosperity of the entire Soviet state. The officer or soldier of the Red Army loves his country like his own mother; he is proud of her riches, of her wide rivers and ancient forests. He also loves the many nations that form the people of his huge country a people welded together in brotherly friendship and the effort to build up a



happy way of life. In the Russian soldier all this combines to form a profound feeling of boundless loyalty to the Soviet State founded by the people themselves and built up by dogged struggle and arduous toil.

The Russian soldier has always been a brave soldier, but to-day this bravery is all the greater because he is fighting for his own state, for his own land, for his own Soviet power. Love of the socialist\*homeland inspires tens of millions of Soviet people to deathless deeds of courage and heroism.

Soviet soldiers are not accustomed to expressing their feelings aloud; their actions, however, speak loudly of their feelings. What, other than love for the people and loyalty to the country, could have enabled the defenders of Stalingrad to withstand the savage onslaught of the enemy! What, other than love for the people and loyalty to the country, could have inspired millions of yesterday's peaceful people—peasants and clerks, workers and scientists, women and adolescents—to deeds of great heroism!

Boundless is the Red Army's loyalty to the people, and the people respond by a great love for their army, loyalty and support to the degree of self-sacrifice. This is a source of the Red Army's strength.

#### IT HAPPENED ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

Anyone who has been on a journey on New Year's Eve will understand the feelings of three Soviet tankmen, Sidorov, Bagridze and Gulkevich, when they found themselves on the platform of a small wayside station in the Urals at 11 p.m. on December 31, 1943.

The three friends were on their way from the front to a school for tank officers and had to change to the local train at this station; they were faced with a wait of four hours. When they discovered this, the three tankmen looked gloomily at each other. The idea of spending four hours in the station waiting-room did not appeal to them—especially on New Year's Eve—which in the U.S.S.R. is a very festive occasion; even at the front, Soviet soldiers celebrate the coming of the new year in some way or other.

"Never mind," said Sidorov with a sigh, "let's hope we'll have better luck next year!"

They agreed with him, but that did not make things any better. A door burst open suddenly and a grey-headed old man came out followed by several young men and women. All of them came over to the tankmen.

"Good evening, friends!" said the old man cheerfully, holding out his hand to the young soldiers. "I am the local dispatcher, Ivan Nikitich Makarov! This is my daughter Lucia and her friends."

The tankmen did not know exactly what was going on, but they took the hands that were stretched out to greet them.

"Do you know them?" Bagridze whispered to Sidorov. "No," answered the latter, and meeting the questioning glance of Gulkevich again said "No" emphatically.

The old man who looked like a real Santa Claus, glanced up at the clock.

"Time won't wait for us," he said. "Hurry up, comrades, we'll see the new year in together. You have almost four hours to wait for your train."

At the very moment when Mikhail Kalinin, President of the Soviet Union, was delivering his traditional New Year's speech over the radio the three young soldiers were already seated in a brightly lit room before a festive board.

At 12 o'clock, together with their new friends and millions of their Soviet people, they raised their glasses to drink to victory and welcome in the New Year.

Sidorov, Bagridze and Gulkevich had never seen the dispatcher Ivan Makarov or his family before. Nevertheless, they felt quite at home amongst them. The happy smiles of the mother of the family, the old man's jokes and the sparkle of Lucia's innocent eyes all served to warm their hearts. They felt they were amongst close friends.

"Thank you, friends," said the old man as he said good-bye to them, "and thank the station-master as well. It is through him that you are here, for he told me that three soldiers were spending New Year's Eve at the station. That was something we couldn't allow!"

To complete this story we should add that the three young tankmen still keep up a correspondence with the Makarov family.

#### PHOTOS ON THE WALL

What happened to the three young tankmen on the eve of the New Year of 1944 could easily have happened to any other Soviet soldiers in any Soviet towns.

Wherever a Red Army soldier goes he is the subject of attention and kindly solicitude. Every citizen of the Soviet Union regards every soldier, officer or private, as a near and dear friend. Every Soviet home is home to the Soviet soldier.

The Red Army is bound to the people by blood ties. Not only their soldiers, but the officers including the generals come from the people.

In a peasant's house all over the U.S.S.R. you will see photographs of officers on the wall; they are the sons of the peasant owner of the house.

If you visit the house of a teacher, or a bee-keeper or a shop-

assistant, a mechanic or a railwayman, you will find photos of generals in the family album, sons, grandsons or nephews of the householder.

A Soviet officer once went to spend the night in a small house on the outskirts of a little Ukrainian town. The lady of the house who was also the local librarian gave him a hearty welcome. While they were at supper an order from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army announcing the liberation of Vinitza was broadcast. Amongst the generals who had gained distinction in battle was the name of a very prominent army commander.

"That's the fifth time in a fortnight that he's been mentioned in Stalin's orders!" said the officer. "Have you heard of that general?" he asked his hostess.

"I've heard of him," she said as she poured out the tea, "he is my nephew."

### THE GIRL IN THE BLUE SWEATER

The Soviet people made the Red Army, not only by providing its rank and file but by providing from amongst the masses of the people army leaders, commanders, designers of aircraft, tanks and guns. All of them are part of the flesh and blood of the people.

From the very beginning of the war the close bonds between the army and the people have made themselves strongly felt. In the Soviet Union the war against the German invaders immediately became a people's war, the people helping the army in every way they could. With each week that passed their assistance increased, and meanwhile behind the German lines the partisan movement spreads like wild fire.

Three days after Soviet troops had liberated Kirovograd some Red Army men saw a girl of about 16 talking to her friend in the vestibule of a cinema.

"That is Nina Solovyova," they were told.

They could hardly believe that this was the famous partisan heroine Nina, the underground worker whose name had become a legend!

In her beret, blue sweater, with her sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks, she looked like a schoolgirl from one of the senior classes.

It was this same Nina Solovyova who, on the instructions of the underground partisan organisation, threw a bomb into the German officer's club in Kiev and escaped; it was this Nina who a month later threw a bomb into the German commandant's house at Krivoi Rog and escaped; it was the same Nina Solovyova who worked as a maid in the house of the German Gebietskommissar in Nikolaev and together with Vera Mikhailenko, another partisan who worked there as a charwoman, installed a time-bomb in the dining-room. This attempt was discovered, but Nina managed to escape although Vera

was executed. The Germans did not hang Vera, they burned her alive. They took her to the forest, bound her to a tree, soaked her in kerosene and set fire to her. The execution took place at night and the light of the living torch could be seen for several miles around. When the Germans visited the scene of their monstrous crime, they found a gallows erected there from which the people of one of the local villages had hanged an S.S. officer whom they had captured.

A tremendous number of similar episodes from the people's war could be told—the exploits of thousands of people who have helped their army by every means in their power and at the cost of their own lives and the lives of those near and dear to them. In this war dozens of people have repeated the legendary exploit of the peasant Ivan Sussanin at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They undertook to lead the Germans to some village or town, but led them into swamps or lost them in the depths of a forest. The guides were shot down by the Nazis but the Germans themselves were trapped in the bogs and impenetrable woodlands.

When the Germans were retreating from Russian towns, bricks, lumps of iron and heavy wooden beams rained down on their heads, dropped by the town dwellers who had climbed on to the roofs or to the upper stories to bid farewell to the enemy. When the Germans retreated from Kharkov five buckets of boiling water were poured on to those who marched along Rymarskaya Street. This "hot shower" was organised by the family of Syromyatko, a bookkeeper in a bank. Syromyatko himself and his seventy-year-old father stood in an attic, the water was carried up to them by the bookkeeper's two sons, aged 13 and 15, while his wife boiled the water.

The punishments which the Germans meted out to anybody who gave shelter to Red Army officers and men who escaped from German prisons are well known to everybody. The lightest of the punishments was death by hanging. In Kursk the Germans drowned three women in a well for giving shelter to a Soviet officer. In Pyatikhatka the Germans murdered four people, one of them an old man, for the same reason; they first cut off the men's arms and legs and then their heads.

Despite this, hundreds and thousands of people on occupied Soviet territory gave shelter to Red Army prisoners of war who escaped from the German camps. Some people hid such escaped prisoners in cellars, garrets and even in their living rooms for several months. When the groups of the Red Army entered Kirovograd, they were met by Private Nikolai Umnov, who had been hidden in the cellars of a building. The building was occupied by the Gestapo and for eight months the soldier had been unable to leave his cellar. An elderly invalid who worked as stoveman brought him food and drink the whole time.

## SHE FOUGHT AT STALINGRAD

Among the most remarkable exploits performed during this People's War were those of the inhabitants of towns who took up arms to fight alongside the Red Army in defence of their houses and their streets when the Germans approached.

During the Battle of Stalingrad, 60-year-old Anna Zubtsova, together with a squad of tommy-gunners, helped defend the house in which she lived. The upper storeys were wrecked and the squad went into the cellars where they held out for three months. At first the squad was in contact with the regiment and ammunition was brought to them somehow. Anna Zubtsova cooked for the soldiers and washed and mended their clothes. Then all communications were cut and the cellar became an isolated fortress. The tommy-gunners, however, and with them Anna Zubtsova, held on to their positions and did not allow the Germans to approach their cellar.

Ammunition ran short. At the end of December food ran out and the soldiers celebrated the new year by taking puffs in turn at a cigarette rolled from their last pinch of tobacco. Not a crumb of bread or a drop of water was left. On New Year's Day Anna Zubtsova volunteered to go to the regiment for food. Taking a bucket she crawled across fire-swept territory and actually reached the position held by the regiment. She came back with the company cook, each of them carrying a bucket of soup. The cook brought his soup safely to the tommy-gunner, but Anna Zubtsova was killed fifty paces away from the cellar.

When she fell, she overturned the bucket.

"I've spilled it! . . . What will my boys do now?" were the last words that the cook heard.

## THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE

An important part in modern warfare is played by the stout hearts of the people. The Soviet people have given ample proof of their steadfastness and readiness to make any sacrifice for victory. It was this steadfastness that supported and inspired them in those days of great tribulation when they had to leave their homes and evacuate thousands of miles to the east, and there, with scarcely a roof overhead, continue their production of shells, machine-guns and ammunition. Their stouthearted determination gave them strength to live through those difficult times when many people abroad, our friends amongst them, prophesied defeat for the Red Army.

In the cold Moscow winter of 1941-42 uniforms were sewn and weapons manufactured for the army. In collective farms—those

near the front and those thousands of miles away—women and boys and girls of 15 and 16 years of age, took the place of the men and improved on their records.

North, south, east and west, all over the vast Union, people sacrificed a considerable part of their earnings for the army. Many people gave the army the savings of a whole lifetime. Teachers and workers, doctors and peasants, railwaymen and engineers clubbed together to buy tanks and aircraft, or even bought them themselves and sent them to the army.

The peasant Ferapont Golovaty was the initiator of this movement. He bought an aeroplane with his savings. The aeroplane, which bore the name of Golovaty on its fuselage, was flown by Guards Major Sergei Yereimin. It took part in the fighting against the Germans at Stalingrad, in the Ukraine and in the Crimea. In the course of eighteen months' fighting, Ferepont Golovaty's aircraft shot down dozens of German planes.

In time, however, the plane wore out and was no longer fit for service, so the peasant Golovaty contributed another large sum, almost a whole year's earnings, and bought another fighter aircraft for Major Yereimin.

The movement which Golovaty began spread to an amazing extent, everybody giving whatever he could to build tanks, aircraft and warships. Thousands of millions of rubles were contributed to the national defence fund.

There have been many instances of fathers using their savings to buy mortars, guns and tanks for their sons. Not very long ago Olga Romashko, a peasant woman, re-armed the platoon which her husband commands.

Many scientists, engineers, lawyers and writers who were awarded Stalin Prizes—the highest award for outstanding achievements in the sciences, arts and letters—immediately handed the whole sum of the prize over to the defence fund.

Mention must also be made of the great success of the Soviet War Loans. Within a few days of the floating of the loans the planned sum was greatly over-subscribed.

#### LETTERS FROM HOME

The help which the Soviet people render the Red Army does not only consist of producing munitions and giving direct support in the form of the partisan movement, individual acts of patriotism, personal self-sacrifice, the contribution of material property; no less important than this "physical" help is the tremendous moral support, that current of moods, impressions and thoughts that

emanates from a people at war and is conveyed to the army at the front through countless channels.

An examination of the letters that the German soldiers receive from home reveals nothing but complaints. There are complaints about air raids, about the collection of winter clothing, about the quality of the bread and conditions in the shops. The spirit of the German people is broken and every letter which comes through the post is evidence of this both in the and contents.

In the course of this war the Soviet people have lived through privation and suffering, have surmounted difficulties such as no other nation has even dreamed of. It is sufficient to mention the barbaric destruction of thousands of Soviet towns and villages by the Germans, the torment suffered by Leningrad, Sevastopol and Odessa, the transfer of workers to new, uninhabited places, the evacuation of hundreds of factories, the difficulties encountered in the food supplies, owing to the loss of the most fertile regions of the U.S.S.R. in the early stages of the war.

The spirit of the Soviet people, however, did not waver. That staunchness, determination and heroism which in twenty-five years, under the most difficult conditions, had built up a splendid industry and changed the face of the whole country, did not betray the Soviet people in war-time.

Since the beginning of the war, everybody in the Soviet Union has been doing his utmost to strengthen the army both materially and morally. People in the rear areas have sent cheerful and inspiring letters to the front. Working in the open in severe winter weather to put up the new buildings for the evacuated factories, frequently reduced to very scanty rations, they never communicated anything to their sons and husbands at the front that could have made them downhearted.

The current of stern determination, staunchness and the spirit of self-sacrifice flowed through those unseen channels which connect the army with the people in the same way as the navel string joins the child to its mother.

"Do not worry about us, everything here is all right," Maria Volkova, a peasant woman from Bryansk wrote to her son at the front after the Germans had burnt down her house. "You think of yourself and not about us, we are living as well at home as we always lived. And if you see a German kill him and remember that you are killing him for us."

#### PRIVATE SMOLYAKOV'S 12,382 FRIENDS

We have already said something about the love and respect shown to everybody in the U.S.S.R. who wears a soldier's uniform. It has

become customary for a soldier who has nobody with whom he can correspond to ask by radio for people to write to him.

Private Fyodor Smolyakov, who was the first to make such an appeal, received 12,382 letters from all parts of the country. 12,382 friends answered this one Red Army man's call.

Everywhere, in theatres, shops and railway stations, the soldier comes first. Everybody is proud to be able to say that his son or his brother is at the front.

Many genuine folk songs have been written about the heroes of the war. There are songs about famous generals and about the men in the ranks. There are songs telling of the soldier's life at the front, of the man in the trenches who is ready at any moment to spill his blood for his country. There are songs that tell of heroic exploits and of unwavering staunchness in the face of a savage foe.

### HIS FAMILY IS SECURE

Serving in the ranks of the Red Army are many men whom the war has separated from their wives and children.

How is the family living without its head, without a man's strength on which to lean? Who helps them in moments of difficulty, who lends them support?

These, fortunately, are questions which do not worry the Soviet soldier. He knows that the whole country, the whole people are taking care of the families of those at the front.

It is sufficient to mention the fact that Marshal Stalin has frequently stressed in his speeches that the care of soldiers' families is a sacred duty, that it takes half the burden off the army.

The Soviet Government carries out a number of comprehensive measures to help Red Army men's families. In the municipalities special departments have been set up to deal exclusively with the requirements of families of soldiers at the front.

They provide them with fuel and repair their houses. In case of need they provide material help in addition to the pensions provided by law. These representatives of the State pay regular visits to soldiers' families and find out on the spot what they are really in need of—shoes for the children, household utensils, furniture, etc., and take immediate steps to render the necessary help.

It is not only the Soviet state, but the whole people that has adopted the soldiers of the Red Army. The peasants allot special sections of the fields, the whole harvest from which is specially distributed amongst soldiers' families.

The trade unions send soldiers' children to the best sanatoriums and arrange rest homes for them.

Workers find time to visit the families of their comrades in the



army in order to render any help necessary. Even school children do whatever they can to make easier the lives of old people whose sons are at the front; they help them in the house in every possible way. Hundreds of thousands of school children are regularly engaged in this work.

The Soviet soldier, therefore, knows that his family is secure and that he has no cause to worry.

### WOMEN IN THE PATRIOTIC WAR

Soviet women and girls have taken their places alongside the men in the Soviet Union's struggle against Hitlerite Germany. Many of them volunteered for service in the regular way.

Soviet women are to be found in almost all units of the Red Army; there are women machine-gunners, A.A. gunners, pilots, snipers, scouts, signallers, doctors, nurses and medical orderlies all of whom are bravely doing their bit at the front and staunchly bearing all the difficulties of war conditions.

Soviet women and girls fighting at the front have shown themselves capable and courageous soldiers, worthy daughters of their people. Thousands of them have been awarded orders and medals and twenty-eight women and girls have received the highest award of all, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

One of the first Heroes of the Soviet Union was Maria Baide, a Crimean scout. This girl found herself surrounded by German tommy-gunners. It seemed that such an unequal struggle must inevitably end in her death. Maria, however, boldly decided to shoot it out with them. She killed 15 Germans, and wounded several more; although wounded, she made her way back to her own unit.

The exploits of the sniper, Hero of the Soviet Union, Ludmila Pavlichenko, who fought at Odessa and Sevastopol, are famous.

She was a history student when she volunteered for service at the front. She became a highly skilled sniper and wiped out 309 Hitlerite invaders. It was only a wound from a bomb splinter that prevented her from killing her 310th.

Another heroine of this war is Alexandra Boiko. When the war broke out she and her husband were working in the Far East, but they decided to go to the front together. They sent a letter to Marshal Stalin, in which they said: "We wish to use our savings of 50,000 rubles to purchase a tank, to go in that tank to the front and with our own hands to wipe out the accursed German fascist occupants. We do not fear difficulties and privations." In his reply telegram Stalin thanked the Boikos for their solicitude for the Red Army and said: "Your wishes will be fulfilled." On February 9, 1944, Ivan and Alexandra Boiko graduated from a tank school after one year's training. Both

had been trained as driver mechanics for heavy tanks and had been given the rank of Junior Lieutenant Technician. From that day to this Alexandra Boika has been at the front side by side with her husband in the tank which they bought. In the many battles they have fought, the Boikos have proved brave and efficient tank drivers. Alexandra Boiko has been awarded the Order of the Patriotic War and her husband the Order of the Red Banner.

There are many women flyers in the Red Army Air Force who have acquired a high degree of skill and displayed exceptional courage. Maria Smirnova, for example, has made over 800 operational flights and is considered one of the best pilots in her regiment. She has been awarded four orders.

Many Soviet women and girls are working in anti-aircraft detachments protecting towns, important communications and industrial enterprises. The first girl to be awarded the Order of Glory was Anya Sundukova of the Leningrad Anti-Aircraft Defences. She is now a sergeant, second in command of a gun crew.

Women play a very important part in the medical services of the Red Army, over half the army doctors being women; they are to be found everywhere, regimental, divisional, corps and brigade doctors, head doctors of hospitals, doctors in landing parties and partisan columns. Many thousands of girls and women are working as nurses and medical orderlies at the front. They know no fear and do not grudge their lives, rendering first aid to the wounded on the battlefield and carrying them to places of safety or the nearest dressing station. Nina Khtyeva, for example, has carried 600 wounded men off the battlefield.

Soviet women have been struggling ruthlessly against the enemy both behind the lines and at the front. The Hitlerites with their bloody "new order" did not succeed in turning the women in the temporarily occupied territories into their humble slaves; they did not succeed in breaking their freedom-loving spirit. The whole world has heard of the courageous struggle of the Soviet partisan women; the names of Heroes of the Soviet Union, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, Liza Chaikina, Antonina Petrova, Ulyana Gromova and many other brave girls will go down in the history of the great war of progressive mankind against fascism.

Former collective-farm milkmaids, tractor drivers, schoolmistresses, students and housewives became bold and determined fighters in the partisan columns. They successfully carried out difficult assignments—they have been on reconnaissance far behind the enemy's lines, blown up enemy dumps, derailed enemy trains and laid ambushes. The 20-year-old partisan girl Anna Dumeshenkova with a group of sapper-comrades derailed six trains. The seventh she derailed in company with her friend Eugénie Leonova. Nina Zvereva led a

detachment of girl partisans operating in Leningrad region and herself killed 25 Hitlerites.

Soviet women have been showing equal courage and self-sacrifice in their work in the factories and on the farms in the Soviet rear areas. Side by side with the men they have ensured that the Red Army has received a full supply of everything necessary.

### *Chapter Seven*

## JOSEPH STALIN SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

### RUSSIA'S GOOD FORTUNE

EVERYBODY TO WHOM LIBERTY AND DEMOCRACY ARE DEAR, WHO DELIGHTS at the victories of the Red Army over mankind's bitterest enemy, Hitlerism, is interested to know why the Red Army is victorious. Should you ask this question of anybody in the Soviet Union, he will answer: "We are winning mainly because Stalin is leading us." These words express the profound truth that one of the most important factors in the Red Army's victories over Nazi Germany's powerful fighting forces is the leadership of Marshal of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army. On September 8, 1942, Mr. Churchill said in the House of Commons that it was Russia's good fortune that she was led by a great and firm captain in her hour of suffering. He was right. Stalin is a big and strong personality, such as is required in the stormy times in which he lives.

The Soviet people's faith in their victory is strengthened by their knowledge that Stalin heads the country; the people know him from his many years of past activity which has placed him in the ranks of the greatest political and military leaders, geniuses of the calibre of Lenin.

Marshal Stalin is sixty-five years of age. He was born in Georgia, in the little town of Gori not far from Tbilisi. The house in which the Marshal commanding the armed forces of the Soviet State spent his boyhood resembled the numerous huts on the outskirts of towns in which the Russian poor found shelter in the past. It consisted of a small room entered directly from the yard, without so much as a single step up or down. The floor was made of brick and a tiny window allowed only little light to enter the room. The sole furniture consisted of a small table, a stool and a wide low divan, covered with a straw mat. This little hut is now a museum which is visited every year by tens of thousands of Soviet citizens. Stalin's parents were very poor. His father worked at a local shoe factory and at times did boot repairs at

home. His mother was a hard-working woman, and in order to make ends meet in her poor household she was forced to hire herself out as a day worker.

Stalin was a good scholar and on leaving school obtained a certificate of merit. After leaving school he entered an ecclesiastical seminary from which, however, he did not graduate; he was expelled by the head of the school for his progressive mode of thinking and his revolutionary ideas. Even in those days, young Stalin astonished his friends by the great variety of his learning and the extent of his reading. He had a good knowledge of Georgian, Russian and foreign classical literature, had read the works of Charles Darwin, the Russian scientist Mendeleyev and many others. He wrote poems which were highly praised by progressive Georgian intellectuals, he understood music, had a good voice and sang well. Stalin always had a book in his hand. On Easter Sunday, 1909, when the tsarist gendarmes made their political prisoners run the gauntlet, Stalin, who was one of them, walked along with a book in his hand and did not bow his head under the blows of their rifle butts.

From the age of fifteen Stalin devoted himself entirely to the struggle for liberation and the creation of a new Russia. Persecuted by the tsarist government, Stalin was sent to prison on many occasions and exiled in distant Siberia. This only served to harden him in the struggle and to convince him of the justice of the cause to which he had devoted himself. Stalin made the acquaintance of Lenin and became his closest collaborator; together with Lenin he played an important part in the struggle for the victory of the Great Socialist Revolution in October, 1917. After the establishment of Soviet power Stalin, together with Lenin, devoted the whole of his great energy to the task of strengthening the young Soviet State, defending its national independence and the sovereignty of its rights.

#### STALIN IS FAR-SIGHTED

While Lenin was still alive, Stalin was his truest supporter, his right hand, his principal adviser in all questions; in extensive party and government circles Stalin was known as a statesman of the calibre of Lenin. After Lenin's death, therefore, he was acknowledged his lawful successor, the leader of the Bolshevik Party, the leader of the entire economic, military and political life of the U.S.S.R.

After Lenin's death the whole weight of leading the great Soviet state and of transforming Russia, fell on Stalin's shoulders. In this task such as history had never before known, Stalin proved a worthy successor to his great teacher, Lenin. In transforming the whole life of the country Stalin placed great importance on the development of science, of theory, for, as he himself often said, without the develop-

ment of a scientific theory all work of a practical nature would be blind, and practical workers would lose their perspective. Stalin introduced new theoretical postulates into philosophy, political economy, history, military science and other subjects. Stalin always says, "In order to lead, one must foresee, in order to foresee, one must analyse."

The ability to foresee is the strongest sign of Stalin's genius. After the death of Lenin, when the question arose of which way the Soviet Union was to go and which path of development its national economy was to take, Stalin answered—"The only correct way is the development of heavy industry, industrialisation."

In February, 1931 Stalin said that the Soviet Union lagged from 50 to 100 years behind the advanced countries of the world, and that we should have to make this up in the course of ten years; we either had to do this or be swallowed up. The Soviet people mustered all their forces and overcame this backwardness by building up a big industry. In doing this the people had to suffer many privations. "Naturally," said Stalin, "we could have begun with the development of light industry, with the production of consumers' goods, cloth, footwear, household utensils and everything which serves to make man's life pleasurable, but then we should not have had our factories, we should not have had machines, we should not have had a war industry and, in the event of an attack on the U.S.S.R. by any of the aggressive states, we should have been beaten."

In the light of the present war launched against the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany with her huge war machine, and the defeat which the Red Army has inflicted on the German army with weapons and engines of war made in the Soviet Union, we can see the correctness of Stalin's view and realise how far-sighted he was.

While he was building up Soviet heavy industry, Stalin also paid attention to the development of farming. Under his guidance the collective farms were established and acquired great popularity amongst the peasantry. We have every reason to believe that if Stalin had not transformed Soviet agriculture by means of the collective farms then the Soviet people and the Red Army would have been without food at the most critical moment in the struggle and would have lost the war.

Stalin always paid great attention to the consolidation of the Soviet people and the establishment of moral and political unity in the country. In this connection we may recall Stalin's rout of the fascist "Fifth Column" in the country. When Hitler was making preparations for his assault on the Soviet Union, he placed his agents in State, Party, Army and Trade Union organisations, using for this purpose the dregs of Soviet society, the Trotskyites and their associates. These mercenary creatures, devoid of honour or conscience, carried on

espionage for Hitler's benefit, intended to kill Stalin and his colleagues, and were preparing for the defeat of the Red Army so as to bring the Soviet people under the heel of Nazi Germany.

It will be remembered that these agents of Hitler sabotaged the country's industry and the country's preparations for defence. On the 1st December, 1934 these fascist scoundrels murdered Kirov, one of the Soviet Union's finest statesmen and a close friend and colleague of Stalin's. Stalin purged the Soviets, the Party, Army and other organisations of Hitler's spies. In a short time the "Fifth Column" was routed and its leaders were executed. The Soviet people approved these measures. The defeat of the "Fifth Column" meant that the U.S.S.R. had won the first round in the battle with Nazi Germany.

The importance of this may be judged from the example of France, Norway, Denmark, Yugoslavia and other countries on the European continent. In these countries, Hitler's agents, quislings of all degrees and colours, disintegrated the countries and made preparations for defeat. Hitler did not find any quislings in Russia, for they were eliminated in 1937, four years before Germany's assault. Much is to be learned from this experience. An army and a nation that have such agents in their rear are, as Stalin says, in the position of people under fire from the front and the rear.

#### YOUR LIFE IS WORTH MORE THAN ANY MACHINE

In his great work for the transformation of Russia, Stalin placed above all else the interests of the people in whom he believed and whose creative abilities he aroused and directed on to the path of victory.

"If my life were not devoted to the service of the working class I should consider it aimless," said Stalin. In his reply to the numerous greetings which he received from organisations and individuals on the occasion of his 50th birthday, he said that in the future as well he was prepared to devote all his energy and all his ability to the cause of the working class and if need be he would sacrifice his life's blood drop by drop.

Stalin values man above all else on earth. In his words, man is the most valuable, the most decisive of all forms of capital. Stalin once asked the great Russian pilot Chkalov why he did not bale out but invariably tried to save his machine.

Chkalov said that when flying very valuable experimental machines the pilot did everything possible, in the event of an accident, to save the machine.

"Your life is worth more than any machine," answered Stalin.

Stalin is extremely solicitous of everything that concerns the life of the soldier. He demands of his generals and officers that they

protect the lives of their soldiers by skilled leadership in battle, that they ensure that the soldier has leisure time, is well fed, has cultural recreations and that commanders confirm the menus for breakfast, dinner and supper and taste the food before it is issued to the men.

Stalin pays great attention to the Red Army medical service which includes an extensive network of medical institutions staffed by the best representatives of medical science. The Soviet public play a great part in tending sick and wounded soldiers. Thousands of Soviet citizens work voluntarily in Army hospitals during their leisure hours. They watch over the sick, read to them and talk with them. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet people have donated blood for transfusions to the wounded. Thanks to the well organised medical service of the Red Army 70 per cent of the wounded go back to the Army cured of their wounds.

Stalin is very simple in his dealings with people. Nobody feels awkward or shy when talking to him. When the airmen Chkalov, Baidukov and Belyakov visited Stalin at his country cottage he walked with them in the garden after dinner, himself wound up the gramophone, invited them to dance, sang songs and then gave them autographed photos as souvenirs.

His constant solicitude for the people, his simplicity, responsiveness and great-heartedness have made Stalin dear to the Soviet people. Every day he receives a stream of letters from all parts of the Union in which people apply to Stalin for the most varied reasons, ranging from requests to explain some profound scientific question to requests for help in arranging personal or family matters. On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday Stalin received thousands of greetings from organisations and individuals. Gifts are sent to Stalin from all parts of the country. They come from young and old, from workers, collective farmers and intellectuals, from housewives and invalids.

The tremendous stream of letters, congratulations and gifts is evidence of the close contact which Stalin maintains with the people. He is the man with whom they instinctively share their joy, to whom they instinctively turn in time of need. He is a man about whom songs, stories and legends have been composed. A true son of the people—that is the picture formed of Stalin in the minds of Soviet people.

### “I AM SORRY FOR SUCH NAVAL SCIENCE”

The years of the war against Nazi Germany have caused Stalin to be known as the greatest military leader of modern times. Mr. Churchill called him “Stalin the Great.” This name well expresses the fame which Stalin enjoys amongst the masses of the freedom loving peoples and that vital rôle which he plays in the war against

Hitler, for Stalin's leadership of the Red Army has made possible the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The people of the Soviet Union have long been aware of Stalin's genius as a strategist. He first appeared on the battlefield in the war of 1918-1920 in Russia. Stalin possesses a natural talent for military science; he learnt the art of war at first hand; he made an independent study of the works of the great strategists and tested the reliability of military doctrines on the battlefield accepting that which was useful and rejecting the useless. Stalin was never hampered by obsolete, static military doctrines; his criterion has always been the correctness and suitability of these doctrines in practical warfare where huge masses of troops are in action. In 1919 fort "Krasnaya Gorka" on the Gulf of Finland had to be captured after its garrison had gone over to the counter-revolutionary general Yudenich who was then attacking Petrograd. The position was heavily fortified and armed with big naval guns. It was unapproachable by land. Stalin proposed to attack the fort and capture it from the sea; the naval experts, however, protested.

"From the viewpoint of naval science," they said, "it is impossible to take the fort from the sea."

"Of course, I am very sorry for such naval science, but still the fort has to be taken," answered Stalin.

The fort was captured by an attack from the sea.

While leading the main operations of the Red Army during the war of 1918-1920 Stalin laid the foundation of the new military science which has attained a higher and more perfected stage in the present Patriotic War. In his orders issued to the commander of the southern armies on the 20th October, 1919, Stalin told him "not to disperse his forces, but to strike in a chosen direction with a concentrated striking force on a narrow front, strike swiftly and decisively." This instruction was the basis for the tactics of movement already adopted by the Red Army in those days.

By adopting new forms of warfare in 1918-1920, Stalin defeated experienced officers of the old Russian armed forces, Admiral Kolchak in Siberia, General Krasnov at Tsaritsyn, General Yudenich at Petrograd, and General Denikin at Voronezh and Orel and in the North Caucasus. The town of Tsaritsyn was renamed Stalingrad in honour of Stalin's victory over Krassnov's troops in 1918.

The victories which the Red Army achieved under Stalin's leadership made him the acknowledged military authority and strategist of the fighting forces of the U.S.S.R. His conduct of operations is studied in all Soviet military academies and it is from them that the officers of the Red Army have learned their skill in leadership. Although in pre-war days Stalin was concerned with questions of the national economy, he still gave considerable attention to the training



and arming of the Red Army for the defence of the country. In peace-time he demanded that the troops be taught only what they would need in war-time and that their training should be as close as possible to actual battle conditions.

### STALIN IN WAR-TIME

On the 3rd July, 1941, in the most difficult period of the war, the radio carried Stalin's voice throughout the whole world. Stalin raised the question which was on the lips of every Soviet citizen and which was repeated by the whole progressive world—surely the German fascist army was not really the invincible force that the boastful fascist propagandists tirelessly claimed it to be? And he answered the question decisively: "Of course not. History shows that there are no invincible armies and never have been. Napoleon's army was considered invincible, but it was beaten successively by the armies of Russia, England and Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm's German army in the period of the first imperialist war was also considered invincible, but it was beaten several times by Russian and Anglo-French troops, and was finally smashed by the Anglo-French forces.

"The same must be said of Hitler's German-fascist army of to-day. This army has not yet met with serious resistance on the continent of Europe. Only on our territory has it met with serious resistance. And if as a result of this resistance the finest divisions of Hitler's German-fascist army have been defeated by our Red Army, it means that this army too can be smashed and will be smashed, as were the armies of Napoleon and Wilhelm."

This was said firmly and with a consciousness of the strength and worthiness of the Soviet people; it sounded like an implacable sentence passed on Nazi Germany.

Stalin is a man of action and his words do not differ from his deeds. He was appointed Supreme Commander-in-Chief and in the first months of the war he solved one of the most difficult and complicated problems raised by the war: he stemmed the advance of the German army. For eighteen months this army had marched victoriously over Europe, seizing towns and conquering states according to Hitler's schedule. The war in Europe was a profitable and easy excursion for the German army. In Russia the German army came up against something quite different.

From the very outset Hitler hurled an army of many millions armed with tens of thousands of tanks, aircraft, cannon and machine-guns. An army of 300,000 moved against Leningrad which was six times the number of those defending the city, while Hitler sent 51 divisions against Moscow.

Stalin's calmness never left him. He was perfectly certain that

the Germans would never take either Leningrad or Moscow. He knew what to do in order to stem the advance of the German army that was tearing into the heart of the country. And in a persistent, planned manner, he prepared the defeat of the enemy.

Stalin ordered the Red Army to defend every inch of Soviet soil, to fight to the last drop of blood for Soviet towns and villages, to fight boldly, bravely, with initiative and intelligence, in true Soviet fashion. A Home Guard was formed in the big cities that were threatened by the German invasion. Their task was to help the Red Army; in the event of the German troops breaking through the outer defences they had to defend their cities with their own forces and with whatever means they had at their disposal. When the German forces approached the town of Tula, Stalin gave orders that the local authorities were to mobilise everybody capable of fighting. He ordered them to defend the town with all their forces and under no circumstances to surrender it to the enemy. The people of Tula announced: "What Stalin has said shall be done," and did not allow the Germans to enter their town. The enemy was brought to a halt here and then thrown back.

When the Germans drew near Leningrad and Moscow, Stalin organised invulnerable defences around these cities. After storming Leningrad for a month the Germans lost about 200,000 officers and men out of their army of 300,000, and almost all their tanks and aircraft. But the town did not fall. In November, 1941, the Germans concentrated 51 divisions for the assault on Moscow. In places they were within 40 kilometres of Moscow, the arms of their gigantic pincers stretching around the city from the north and south. Stalin brought up troops, tanks, air forces and artillery and struck a powerful counter-blow at the German army; the enemy fled from Moscow after losing 85,000 officers and men in killed alone.

Stalin's defensive strategy which brought the German army to a standstill and inflicted losses of four million in killed, wounded and prisoners in four months of war in 1941, astonished the whole world. Stalin, however, did not stop at this; he worked out a new strategy, an offensive strategy.

The most difficult thing in any war is for an army that is fighting on the defensive to assume the offensive. This was still more difficult in the present war in which armies of many millions are involved. Stalin solved this problem. The first Red Army offensive which Stalin organised took place in the winter of 1941-42.

After the blitzkrieg of the summer of 1941 had failed, Hitler decided to pass the winter in defence in order to replenish his battered army with reserves and begin a new offensive in the summer. Stalin saw through Hitler's plan. Comparing his own strength with that of the

Germans, he saw that a Red Army offensive promised success. He ordered the winter offensive to begin.

Stalin's plan vindicated itself in a brilliant manner. In the winter of 1941-42 the Red Army struck the Germans some hammer blows at Moscow, Rostov, Tikhvin and Leningrad. The Red Army drove the Germans to the west—in some places as much as 250 miles—and inflicted heavy losses in men and machines. In the winter fighting Hitler expended a considerable part of those reserves which he intended using for the summer offensive of 1942. Stalin inflicted the first decisive defeat which the German army had suffered in the second World War. Hitler himself admitted that the German army stood on the brink of a catastrophe as a result of this defeat.

Stalin's ability to fathom the strategical plans of his enemy correctly, and in good time, and to counter them successfully is one of the outstanding features of his military genius.

When the Germans began their offensive in south Russia in the summer of 1942 the world press was full of all kinds of interpretations and speculations concerning the aims of the offensive. The most widespread version was that Hitler intended to seize the Caucasus and then advance through Iran into India. Many foreign observers considered that this was the chief objective of the German offensive.

Stalin, however, realised that the German offensive was directed first and foremost against Moscow. Hitler intended to capture Stalingrad, move up the Volga and capture Moscow from the East. The drive into the Caucasus was at that time only of secondary importance and was intended, according to the German idea, to detract the main forces of the Red Army from the decisive sectors of the front. The conquest of India which, of course, was included in Hitler's insane plans, was to take place at a much later period. Moscow came first, then the Caucasus and then the springboard for the campaign against India.

At the time when the Nazis, drunk with success, were preparing to celebrate victory, Stalin was working out a plan for their defeat, preparing a powerful crushing blow against the German armies at Stalingrad.

When Hitler's armies reached Stalingrad, they had been led into a huge trap. His army was exhausted in the fierce fighting against the Soviet troops and could not continue the offensive. After wearing down the Germans in defensive fighting, Stalin attacked them from the flanks. On November 19, 1942, the Red Army offensive began. Within a few days the German front was breached in the north and in the south. The trap closed: a 330,000 strong German army under Field Marshal von Paulus was surrounded. The encircled German troops refused to capitulate and were decimated by Soviet divisions. 147,200 German dead remained on the battlefield at Stalingrad.

After the Stalingrad defeat Stalin began his pursuit of Hitler's army. During the winter of 1942-43 the Germans were driven from the Don, the Kuban and the North Caucasus, some of the most fertile regions of the Soviet Union. Hitler's plan of campaign for 1942-43 collapsed completely.

This was the severest defeat which the German army had suffered throughout the whole of its history. Hitler announced three days of mourning throughout Germany for the armies that had been annihilated at Stalingrad. It is now obvious to everybody that these were days of mourning for the Hitler regime: the Battle of Stalingrad was the beginning of the end of the German fascist army.

The defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad was the victory of Stalin's military genius. This one battle alone is sufficient to immortalise the name of Joseph Stalin as the greatest military leader of all time. On March 6, 1943, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. awarded Stalin the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union for his outstanding services in the conduct of the war.

#### STALIN'S BLOWS ARE SURE

Marshal Stalin teaches his officers and men to strike swiftly and surely. He is a past-master at delivering accurate and crushing blows, a master of the knock-out on the battlefield.

Thanks to his mental flexibility and deep powers of penetration, Stalin is able to make a rapid and accurate estimate of the relations of the fighting forces and the real prospects of proposed operations. He neither over-estimates nor under-estimates his enemy. It is characteristic of him that at the very beginning of the war, when the German army was still bathing in the glory of swift and easy victory, Stalin said: "The devil is not so terrible as he is painted . . ."

Sober realism and outstanding military genius enabled Stalin to strike ever increasing blows at Hitler's war machine so that the German army could not recover from them, could not regain its former fighting qualities or make good its losses. In this respect a few figures concerning the operations of the German army during the three war years in Russia are of interest.

In 1941 for a period of five months the German army advanced along the whole length of the Soviet-German front from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. In the winter of 1941-42 the Red Army under Stalin's leadership dealt the German army its first counter-blow. After this blow the German army assumed the offensive in the summer of 1942, and continued it on a sector of the front only 400-500 kilometres in width with a drive in one direction.

In the winter of 1942-43 Stalin dealt the German army its heaviest defeat at Stalingrad. The result of this was that in the summer of

1943 the German army was able to launch its offensive at Kursk only on a sector of the front 80-100 kilometres in width and to continue its offensive for only eleven days. In this offensive the German army lost 30 picked divisions and gained nothing. This was the last offensive the German army was able to stage in the East.

#### WHAT THE SOLDIER THOUGHT OF IN DIFFICULT DAYS

Marshal Stalin possesses determination and unwavering coolness. These qualities are best seen in the most dangerous, critical moments. With whatever ferocity the hurricane may be raging around him, Stalin continues coolly and methodically with his work. He knows what he wants and always has a clear view of the path to that objective which he will achieve come what may.

In the autumn of 1941 the Germans were besieging Leningrad and captured the Donets Basin; they had reached a point within 40 kilometres of Moscow and were attacking the Soviet capital. Hitler had already ordered a German army parade on the Red Square in Moscow. Not only in the enemy camp, but also among the friends of the U.S.S.R. there were people who believed that Moscow would soon fall and that the Red Army had already lost the war.

But Stalin was cool and confident. He remained in Moscow with his staff.

General Rokossovsky, now Marshal, the hero of Stalingrad, was then fighting at Moscow. This is what he himself has said:

"Those were critical days when we were retreating under the pressure of superior enemy forces. Suddenly I was called to the telephone. 'This is Stalin speaking,' I heard. 'Report on the situation!'"

"I gave him the full details of the situation on our sector of the front, trying to remember every little thing. In answer to my report came the calm voice, 'Stick it out. Help is coming.'"

"The very next day we realised the full significance of those words. The measures which Stalin had taken enabled us to stop the retreat and later to go over to a counter-offensive."

In the difficult days of autumn, 1941, when the German offensive had reached its zenith, Stalin addressed a meeting in honour of the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and said that the defeat of the German imperialists and their army was inevitable. The whole country heard Stalin's speech on the radio, full of strength, confidence and the will to victory. German bombers raided Leningrad during the transmission of the speech. The alert was sounded and bombs were dropped, but the people of Leningrad did not go to their shelters; they remained at the radios to hear Stalin confidently forecasting victory and pointing out the road to it.

On November 7, 1941, Stalin ordered a parade of troops on the Red Square in Moscow. Early in the morning he went out into the tribune with his colleagues, delivered a speech and remained on the Red Square for an hour and a half, the whole time of the parade. This historic parade was carried out under the very noses of the Germans. The units that marched past the tribune continued on their way directly to the front. They took with them Stalin's coolness and determination, Stalin's will to victory. It was these units that assumed the offensive on December 6, and smashed the Germans' at Moscow.

When the Germans were storming Stalingrad and had already reached the Caucasus, Stalin did not get flurried. He could see far ahead and he already knew that the battle would be won. Generals who reported to Stalin in those days came out of his room looking pleased and said to their comrades:

"Stalin is absolutely calm! He only laughs slyly into his moustaches when we talk about the Germans at Stalingrad. Apparently he already has a plan for defeating them! . . ."

The generals were right, Stalin already had the plan in his head, when the time came he put it into effect on the Stalingrad battlefield.

Stalin's boundless energy and unswerving will are an inexhaustible source of inspiration and moral strength for all Soviet soldiers. When things go badly with them they always ask themselves: "What would Stalin do in this situation?"—and always emerge victorious from the fiercest encounters.

When the Germans at Stalingrad pressed part of the Soviet troops back to the Volga, nobody retreated to the left bank of the river. The headquarters of General Chuikov, commanding the 62nd army, was within 200 yards of the enemy. On several occasions German Tommy-guns attacked the headquarters and were repulsed by the staff officers.

But even in those grim days Soviet officers and men thought of victory and not of defeat. In the cellar of a ruined house which was being defended by a group of Soviet soldiers, a Red Army man told his comrades how he had been behind the German lines and had seen them burning Soviet villages, killing civilians and behaving like savage beasts. "Never mind," answered another soldier, "We'll make the Germans answer for all that when we get to Berlin."

Stalin has not only fought the Germans at the front, but also in the rear areas. Soviet partisans created conditions which were unbearable for the Hitlerite armies in the occupied Soviet territories. During the first two years of the war, Stalin's partisans, peaceful Soviet people who had taken up arms to fight against the fascist invaders in response to Stalin's call, accounted for over 300,000 of the German invaders, amongst them 30 generals, 6,336 officers and 1,520 airmen; took 2,747 officers and men prisoner, wrecked 3,000 trains, blew up 3,263 bridges

and destroyed 1,191 tanks, 476 aircraft, 376 guns, 14,645 motor vehicles and 895 bases and dumps. These are successes of which any regular army could be proud.

Marshal Stalin carefully follows up the work of all his soldiers and promotes talented generals and other officers to higher posts. Since the war began Stalin has trained a group of brilliant marshals and generals with whose aid he has been able to realise his operative plans. Amongst these victorious generals are Marshals of the Soviet Union Zhukov and Vasilevsky, Stalin's closest colleagues, Marshal of Artillery Voronov, Chief Air Marshals Novikov and Golovanov, Marshal of the Armoured Forces Fedorenko and Rotmistrov and the commanders of the fronts, Marshals of the Soviet Union Rokossovsky, Koniev, Malinovsky, Tolbukhin, Govorov, Generals Maslennikov, Yeremenko, Bagramyan, Chernyavhovsky, Zakharov, Meretskov and hundreds of other officers who have proved themselves brilliant Red Army Commanders.

Acts of individual heroism do not escape the attention of Marshal Stalin. During the fighting for the village of Chernushki, Guardsman Alexander Matrosov reached an enemy blockhouse and covered the embrasure with his body, sacrificing his own life to ensure the success of his unit. Marshal Stalin ordered the regiment in which he served to be re-named the "254th Alexander Matrosov Guards Infantry Regiment" and Matrosov's name to be placed on the roll of No. 1 Company in perpetuity.

Marshal Stalin is constantly training his army on the basis of the experiences gained in war. His orders disclose any defects in operations and show how they are to be avoided. He examines and edits the regulations for the Red Army and instructions for the use of separate branches of the army. He does not relax when success has been obtained but regards each victory as the starting point of a further forward movement. For this reason the armament of the Red Army is continually being increased and the skill of its personnel is being constantly improved.

### EVERYTHING INTERESTS STALIN

One of the most serious mistakes which Hitler made when he attacked the U.S.S.R. was his hope that the country would be morally and politically weak. He expected that after the first serious blow had been delivered the Soviet Union would be defeated and would cease to resist. He believed that failure at the front would give rise to unrest amongst the civil population, that revolts would be raised in the rear, and the German army would soon reach the Urals. All this, in Hitler's opinion, would compel the Soviet Government to capitulate to Germany. It was on these illusions of an easy victory

that Hitler laid his plans for a "blitzkrieg," and tried to convince the world that Russia would collapse in one and a half to two months. Reality had the laugh on the Germans.

The strengthening of the moral forces of the people was one of the most important elements in Stalin's plan for the conduct of war against Nazi Germany. Stalin showed the people and the Red Army the real objects for which Hitler's gang started the war against the Soviet Union. Hitler hoped to capture Soviet territory that had been watered with the sweat of Soviet people, capture grain and oil that had been won from the earth by hard toil, destroy the national cultures and the national state existence of the Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Uzbeks, Tatars, Moldavians, Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanians and other free Soviet peoples, Germanise them and make them the slaves of Hitlerite Germany. It was, therefore, a matter of life or death for the Soviet state, life or death for the peoples of the U.S.S.R. And in the course of this war Hitler has tried to kill off as many Soviet people as possible and to make slaves of the remainder.

The experience of the war has shown the correctness of Stalin's estimate of Hitler's predatory aims. When they invaded Soviet territory the Germans everywhere began a policy of looting and massacring Soviet citizens. In order to achieve their monstrous aims, the Germans hanged and shot Soviet citizens by tens of thousands, left them to die of hunger, infected them with typhus, annihilated them with poison gases, and burnt them alive. Many of their concentration camps were turned into "death factories." German technicians designed special wagons in which 60 to 70 people were killed by poison gases in the course of 7 minutes. The Germans considered this form of massacre economical as it did not require the expenditure of ammunition. The massacre of Soviet citizens in the occupied territories was carried out on the instructions of Hitler and was in every way encouraged by the Supreme Command. A photograph was found amongst the letters of a dead German officer in which he appears at the head of a group of soldiers photographed against the background of a poster which reads: "The Russians must be annihilated so that the Germans may live."

By massacring Soviet people Hitler hoped to intimidate them and force them to cease resistance. Here again Hitler made a mistake. Stalin called on the Red Army and the people to respond to the Germans by a war of annihilation. Stalin gave the Soviet people and the Red Army orders to kill every German who entered Soviet territory for the purpose of oppressing the country; he ordered them to wipe out the occupationists if they offered resistance and did not surrender.

In a very short time the Germans felt the effect of Stalin's words, both at the front and behind their lines on Soviet territory.



As has been related the whole Soviet people, in one united body, came to the support of the Red Army fighting at the front. Stalin directed the entire energies of all workers, peasants, scientists and intellectuals to the task of helping the Red Army under the slogan of "Everything for the Front, Everything for Victory!" The most difficult and intricate large-scale organisational work was accomplished.

The whole of this gigantic work done on the home front was and still is, under the direction of Stalin. He gives instructions to those who are making tanks, mortars, aircraft and guns, instructions that are always of assistance to the designers of these engines of war. Not a single scientific achievement or invention escapes his attention. Not infrequently Stalin telephones an inventor, congratulates him on the success of his work, invites him to visit him, talks with him personally and gives him practical advice. The extraordinary thing about these conversations is that Stalin talks with engineers and scientists as though he were a leading specialist in their particular field. Thanks to Stalin's leadership the equipment of the Red Army is improved daily leaving that of the German army far behind.

The heroic labour and the great moral strength of the people in the rear areas is a reliable support for the Red Army and ensures its further victories at the front. The organisation of the work of the rear areas for the support of the front is one of the component parts of Stalin's plan for the conduct of the war, it is part side of Stalin's many-sided work.

### HE SAVED HIS COUNTRY

Marshal Stalin is able to give a short but true characteristic of the enemy, of the German officers and men and of Hitler's strategy and tactics. In reply to those lovers of historical parallels who compared Hitler to Napoleon, Stalin said that "Hitler resembles Napoleon as a kitten resembles a lion." Stalin gave a short and concise account of the morale of the rulers of Germany: they are low and contemptible people, devoid of honour, who have fallen to the level of brute beasts. The German fascist party which calls itself "National Socialist" for the purpose of deceiving the people, was characterised by Stalin as the party of the most rapacious and predatory imperialists, the enemies of democratic liberties, the party of medieval reaction and black-hundred pogroms. The Hitlerite generals boasted of the superiority of their strategy and tactics. Stalin answered in a few words—their strategy is defective, their tactics stereotyped. German propagandists praise to the skies the bravery of German officers who supposedly have no like in any other armies. In reply to this Stalin said that the bravery of the German officer is of a relative character; he is brave when he has to deal with unarmed prisoners of war and

civilians, but he loses his courage when he is faced by the organised might of the Red Army. As the Russian saying goes, "they are brave when confronted by sheep, but sheep when confronted by the brave."

The whole democratic world is filled with admiration for Stalin's masterly leadership of Red Army operations. This admiration is easy to understand when we consider that in 1941 the Germans were besieging Leningrad and were only 40 kilometres away from Moscow; in 1942 they reached the Volga and were inside Stalingrad; three years later the Red Army was thrashing the Germans in the Baltic republics, in the foothills of the Carpathians, on the territory of Rumania, in Poland and on the frontiers of Germany in East Prussia. The German army, the strongest army in the world, which German propagandists loudly declared was invincible, has been routed on the fields of the Soviet Union and has lost almost all its regular divisions. And now it has been driven back across the frontiers and into the recesses of its own lair—Germany itself.

Despite his 65 years Stalin is still at the height of his strength.

In the course of his life this man has done much for the Russian people. His services during the war against Nazi Germany have been especially great. The Soviet people have expressed their appreciation of these services in the following profound and moving sentence: "Stalin has saved the Soviet Union from German slavery."

### *Chapter Eight*

## THE RED ARMY AN ARMY OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND RETRIBUTION

THE RED ARMY IS AN ARMY OF PEACE AND FOR THIS REASON IT FIGHTS against the aggressors with such self-sacrifice and inspired heroism. The Red Army has been trained in the spirit of the friendship of the peoples, the equality of all citizens irrespective of their race or nationality and for this reason it has been fighting with such dogged determination and courage against those who preach race theories, against racial superiority and national oppression. The Red Army has been trained as the army of a socialist country, the bulwark of the Soviet Union's independence; and for this reason it has displayed unparalleled staunchness and magnificent valour in the struggle against the German army which had set itself the task of destroying the Soviet state with fire and sword and enslaving the Soviet people.

The Red Army is an Army of Progress and Progressive Culture and for this reason it has conducted such an impassioned struggle against the savagery, barbarity and medieval obscurantism of the Hitlerite war machine. The Red Army has been trained in the ideals

of humanism, of respect for the personality of every man and for this reason every soldier is prepared to give his life in order to wipe out and completely destroy the ruthless army of rapacious plunderers and murderers which for the sake of personal enrichment is prepared to loot the whole world and destroy everything built up by human genius throughout the centuries.

The fascist leaders of the German state and the German army thought they could intimidate Soviet people and the Red Army by terror and mass murder. They thought that by killing prisoners of war, women, children and the aged, by the use of gas chambers, gas wagons and gallows and by driving millions of people off into slavery they could break the will of the Red Army and establish the rule of German nationalism and insatiable imperialism on the territory of the Soviet Union and throughout the whole of Europe. The fulfilment of these plans for enslaving and exploiting hundreds of millions of people was prevented by the Red Army, by the profound love of liberty possessed by the Soviet soldier who has been educated under socialism. Hitlerite Germany's gigantic war machine has been overwhelmingly defeated.

One has only to compare Europe in the middle of 1941 with the Europe of to-day in order to realise the tremendous advance made by mankind since then. At that time the swastika flag waved victoriously over the whole of Europe; with a beating of drums and a fanfare of trumpets the technically well-armed Hitlerite army, already accustomed to plunder, rapine and terror, began its campaign in the East. Now the German army has been driven back beyond its own frontiers after suffering tremendous losses under the crushing blows of the Red Army. The wounded fascist beast is being finished off in its own lair. One after another the peoples are liberating their countries from the brown plague.

The international trust headed by Germany for the enslavement and exploitation of the nations has dissolved. The axis has collapsed. Despite exchanges of pleasantries with Japanese statesmen Hitler Germany is receiving no military aid from Japan and is fighting alone against the mighty coalition of freedom-loving peoples. The fact that liberty is dawning over enslaved Europe, that a considerable part of Italy, almost the whole of France and Belgium, part of the Netherlands and three-quarters of Yugoslavia have been liberated from Hitlerite oppression, while Rumania, Bulgaria, Finland and Hungary have been knocked out of the Hitlerite coalition is first and foremost due to the services rendered by the Red Army which day and night, summer and winter, spring and autumn, without fatigue and without let-up has been fighting on a 3,000 kilometre front against Hitler's bandit coalition.

The Red Army has weakened Hitler's army and Hitler's Germany.

The Red Army created the necessary conditions for the successful offensive of Great Britain and the U.S.A. in the west, and for the development of the liberation movement amongst the oppressed people. This great effort of the Red Army will go down in history and will live for ever in the memory of future generations.

The fate of rapacious Hitlerite Germany is already sealed, but the Red Army will not lay down its arms until the last unit of the German army has been routed, until the last German bandit has been disarmed. The army of peace and justice will listen neither to the demagogic peace overtures of the Hitlerites nor to the pacifist twaddle of secret pro-fascists and open conciliators in various countries.

Now that the fate of fascist Germany is sealed, open and hidden friends of Hitler Germany have appeared on the scene who desire at all costs to save the fascist regime and the fascist officials. Friends of fascist Germany cry for mercy and point out that it is to the interests of mankind to make some sort of compromise with Germany. They even fall back on Christian feelings in order to soften the hearts of fighters for peace, justice and retribution. The peacemakers are particularly eloquent in their efforts to save Hitler's associates in the oppressed countries. They find thousands of excuses to justify those who have betrayed their people. These gentlemen need not strive so hard for in this case no demogogy will help. Hitler Germany will be destroyed to its very foundations. All the plunderers, murderers and oppressors of free peoples will be crushed by the victorious Red Army and the armies of Great Britain and the U.S.A. All those who held back their people in order to prevent them fighting against Hitlerite slavery, all the friends and associates of Hitler Germany must go down with her. Appeals for mercy are in vain. There can be no mercy for those who have killed millions of defenceless people. Humanism in respect of these dregs of society would be a mockery of history and human culture. The destruction of Hitlerism which made banditry its program, sadism its tactics and mass murder its politics is the highest form of humanism. In order that mankind may exist and progress, Hitlerism must be destroyed throughout the whole world. To permit the Hitlerite regime to remain in any form, to show mercy to those who inspired and executed unheard-of crimes, to declare an amnesty for Hitler's associates and morally justify traitors means the creation of pre-requisites for another more horrible and still more destructive war.

The Red Army brings peace to the nations and the sword to fascism. Only by destroying the "new order" to its foundation and wiping out those who built up this order, will it be possible to ensure peace, liberty and independence in all countries. The defeat of the Hitlerite war machine without the moral and political defeat of fascism would only be half a victory and the Soviet people like all other liberty-

loving peoples, desires the complete destruction of fascism, in its state system, its home policy, its economics, its culture, its science, its international relations and in the consciousness of the people.

It is for this that the army of peace, justice and retribution, the army of liberation, the Red Army of the Soviet Union, has fought, is fighting and will fight to the end.

*Appendix*

Report by

**J. V. STALIN**

*Chairman of the State Committee  
for Defence*

On the 27th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution

Made at a Celebration Meeting of the Moscow  
Soviet of Working People's Deputies, held jointly  
with representatives of the Communist Party, Public  
Organisations and Red Army on November 6, 1944

COMRADES,

To-day the Soviet people celebrate the 27th Anniversary of the triumph of the Soviet Revolution in our country. This is the fourth time that our country is observing the anniversary of the Soviet Revolution in the midst of the Patriotic War against the German-Fascist invaders. That does not mean, of course, that the fourth year of the war does not differ from the preceding three years of war in its results. On the contrary, there is a radical difference between them.

Whereas the preceding two years of the war were years when the German forces were on the offensive and when they advanced into the interior of our country—years when the Red Army was compelled to fight defensive actions—and whereas the third year of the war was a year of radical change on our front, when the Red Army launched powerful offensive actions, smashed the Germans in a number of decisive battles, cleared the German troops out of two-thirds of Soviet territory and compelled them to pass to the defensive while the Red Army was still waging war on the German forces single-handed without serious support from the Allies—the fourth year of war has been a year of decisive victories over the German forces for the Soviet armies and the armies of our Allies, a year in which the Germans, now compelled to fight on two fronts, found themselves flung back to the German frontiers.

In the upshot, this year has ended in the expulsion of the German forces from the Soviet Union, France, Belgium and Central Italy, and the transfer of hostilities to German territory.

## 1. GERMANY IN THE VICE BETWEEN THE TWO FRONTS

The decisive successes of the Red Army this year and the expulsion of the Germans from Soviet territory were pre-determined by the succession of shattering blows which our troops dealt the German forces beginning as far back as last January and then following throughout the year under review.

The first blow was struck by our troops in January this year at Leningrad and Novgorod, when the Red Army broke up the permanent German defences and flung the enemy back to the Baltic area. This blow resulted in the liberation of the Leningrad Region.

The second blow was struck in February and March this year on the River Bug, when the Red Army routed the German forces and flung them beyond the Dniester. As a result of this blow the Ukraine west of the Dnieper was freed of the German-Fascist invaders.

The third blow was struck in April and May this year in the area of the Crimea, when the German troops were flung into the Black Sea. As a result of this blow the Crimea and Odessa were delivered from German oppression.

The fourth blow was struck in June this year in the area of Karelia, when the Red Army routed the Finnish forces, liberated Vyborg and Petrozavodsk, and flung the Finns back into the interior of Finland. This blow resulted in the liberation of the greater part of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Republic.

The fifth blow was struck at the Germans in June and July this year, when the Red Army utterly routed the German forces at Vitebsk, Bobruisk and Mogilev; this blow culminated in the encirclement of thirty German divisions at Minsk. As a result of this blow our forces: (a) liberated the whole of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic; (b) gained the Vistula and liberated a considerable part of Poland, our Ally; (c) gained the Nyeman and liberated the greater part of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic; and (d) forced the Nyeman and approached the frontiers of Germany.

The sixth blow was struck in July and August this year in the area of Western Ukraine, when the Red Army routed the German forces at Lvov and flung them beyond the San and Vistula. As a result of this blow: (a) the Western Ukraine was liberated; and (b) our troops forced the Vistula and set up a strong bridgehead beyond it west of Sandomir.

The seventh blow was struck in August this year in the Kishinev and Jassy area, when our troops utterly routed the German and Rumanian forces. It culminated in the encirclement of twenty-two German divisions at Kishinev, this number not including Rumanian divisions. As a result of this blow; (a) the Moldavian Soviet Republic

was liberated; (b) Germany's Rumanian ally was put out of action and declared war on Germany and Hungary; (c) Germany's Bulgarian ally was put out of action and likewise declared war on Germany; (d) the road was opened for our troops to Hungary, Germany's last ally in Europe; and (e) the opportunity arose to reach out a helping hand to Yugoslavia, our Ally, against the German invaders.

The eighth blow was struck in September and October this year in the Baltic area, when the Red Army routed the German forces at Tallinn and Riga and drove them from the Baltic area. As a result of this blow : (a) the Estonian Soviet Republic was liberated; (b) the greater part of the Latvian Soviet Republic was liberated; (c) Germany's Finnish ally was put out of action and declared war on Germany; and (d) over thirty German divisions found themselves cut off from Prussia and gripped in pincers between Tukums and Libava where they are now being hammered to a finish by our troops.

In October this year the ninth blow was launched by our troops between the Tisza and the Danube in the area of Hungary; its purpose is to put Hungary out of the war and turn her against Germany. As a result of this blow, which has not yet been consummated : (a) our forces rendered direct assistance to our Ally Yugoslavia in driving out the Germans and liberating Belgrade; (b) our troops obtained the opportunity of crossing the Carpathians and stretching out a helping hand to our Ally the Czechoslovak Republic, part of whose territory has already been freed from the German invaders.

Lastly, at the end of October this year, a blow was dealt at the German troops in Northern Finland, when the German troops were knocked out of the Pechenga area and our troops, pursuing the Germans, entered the territory of our ally Norway.

I shall not give figures of losses in killed and prisoners which the enemy sustained in these operations, of the number of guns, tanks, aircraft, shells and machine-guns captured by our troops. You are probably acquainted with these figures from the Communiques of the Soviet Information Bureau.

Such are the principal operations carried out by the Red Army during the past year, operations which have led to the expulsion of the German forces from our country.

As a result of these operations as many as 120 divisions of the Germans and their allies have been routed and put out of action. Instead of the 257 divisions that faced our front last year, of which 207 were German, we now have against our front—after all the “total” and “super-total mobilisations”—a total of only 204 German and Hungarian divisions, the German divisions numbering no more than 180.

It must be admitted that in this war Hitlerite Germany with her fascist army has proved a more powerful, crafty and experienced adversary than Germany and her army were in any war of the past. It



should be added that in this war the Germans succeeded in exploiting the productive forces of nearly the whole of Europe and the quite considerable armies of their vassal states.

And if, in spite of these favourable conditions for the prosecution of the war, Germany nevertheless finds herself on the brink of imminent destruction, the explanation is that her chief adversary, the Soviet Union, has surpassed Hitlerite Germany in strength.

What must be regarded as a new factor in the war against Hitlerite Germany this past year is that this year the Red Army has not been operating against the German forces single-handed, as was the case in previous years, but together with the forces of our Allies. The Teheran Conference was not held for nothing. The decision of the Teheran Conference on a joint blow at Germany from west, east and south began to be carried out with astounding precision.

Simultaneously with the summer operations of the Red Army on the Soviet-German Front, the Allied forces launched the invasion of France and organised powerful offensive operations which compelled Hitler Germany to wage war on two fronts. The troops and Navy of our Allies accomplished a mass-landing operation on the coast of France that was unparalleled in history for scope and organisation, and overcame the German fortifications with consummate skill.

Thus, Germany found herself gripped in a vice between two fronts.

As was to be expected, the enemy failed to withstand the joint blows of the Red Army and the Allied forces. The enemy's resistance was broken, and his troops in a short time were knocked out of Central Italy, France, Belgium and the Soviet Union. The enemy *was flung back to the German frontiers*.

There can be no doubt that without the opening of the Second Front in Europe, which holds as much as 75 German divisions, our troops would not have been able to break the resistance of the German forces and knock them out of the Soviet Union in such a short time. But it is equally indubitable that without the powerful offensive operations of the Red Army in the summer of this year, which held as many as 200 German divisions, the forces of our Allies could not have coped so quickly with the German forces and knocked them out of Central Italy, France and Belgium.

The task is to keep Germany gripped in this vice between the two fronts. That is the key to victory.

## 2. THE GREAT EXPLOIT OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE IN THE PATRIOTIC WAR

If the Red Army was able successfully to fulfil its duty to its Motherland and drive the Germans from Soviet soil, it was because

of the unreserved support it received in the rear from our whole country, from all the peoples of our country. "Everything for the Front!" has been the watchword this year in the selfless work of all Soviet people—workers, peasants, intellectuals—as well as in the directing activities of our Government and Party bodies.

The past year has been marked by fresh successes in industry, agriculture and transport, by further progress in our war economy. With the war in its fourth year, our factories are producing several times as many tanks, planes, guns, mortars and ammunition as at the beginning of the war. In the rehabilitation of agriculture the most difficult period lies behind us. With the fertile lands of the Don and Kuban restored to our country after the liberation of the Ukraine, our agriculture is recovering rapidly from its grave losses.

The Soviet railways have stood a strain that the transport of any other country would hardly be able to bear.

All this indicates that the economic foundation of the Soviet State has proved to possess infinitely greater vitality than the economy of the enemy states.

The Socialist system born of the October Revolution has lent our people and our Army a great, invincible strength. Despite the heavy burden of this war, despite the temporary occupation by the Germans of very large and economically important parts of the country, the Soviet State did not reduce the supply of arms and ammunition for the front as the war proceeded, but increased it from year to year. To-day the Red Army has not less but more tanks, guns and planes than the German Army. As for quality, our war material is far superior to that of the enemy in this respect.

Just as the Red Army in its long and arduous single-handed struggle won military victory over the Fascist forces, so the working people of the Soviet rear won an economic victory over the enemy in their long fight against Hitlerite Germany and her associates.

The Soviet people have denied themselves many necessities, have consciously accepted serious material privations, in order to give more for the front.

The unexampled hardships of the present war have not broken, but further tempered the iron will and courageous spirit of the Soviet people. Our people has justly won for itself the fame of a heroic nation. Our working class gives all its strength for the cause of victory, constantly perfects the technique of production, increases the capacity of industrial enterprises, erects new mills and factories. The working class of the Soviet Union has a great labour exploit to its credit in the present war.

Our intellectuals proceed boldly along the road of innovation in the sphere of technique and culture, successfully promoting modern science, displaying the creative spirit in applying its achievements to

the production of munitions for the Red Army. By their creative work, the Soviet intellectuals have made an invaluable contribution to the enemy's defeat.

An army cannot fight and win without modern arms, but neither can it fight and win without bread, without food. Thanks to the solicitude of the collective farm peasantry, the Red Army is experiencing no shortage of food in this fourth year of war. Men and women collective farmers are supplying the workers and intellectuals with food, and industry with raw materials, making it possible for factories and mills producing arms and equipment for the front to function normally.

Our collective farm peasantry, actively and fully conscious of its duty to its Motherland, is helping the Red Army to achieve victory over the enemy.

The matchless labour of Soviet women and of our splendid youth will go down in history, for it is they who have carried on their own shoulders the main burden of the work in the factories and mills, on the collective and state farms.

For the sake of the honour and independence of the Motherland, Soviet women, young men and girls are displaying true valour and heroism on the labour front. They have shown themselves worthy of their fathers and sons, husbands and brothers who are defending the Motherland against the German fascist fiends. The labour feats of the Soviet people in the rear, like the immortal deeds of our soldiers at the front, are rooted in the fervent and life-giving spirit of Soviet patriotism.

The strength of Soviet patriotism lies in the fact that it has as its foundation not racial or nationalistic prejudices, but the people's profound loyalty and devotion to their Soviet Motherland, the fraternal partnership of the working people of all the nations in our country. Soviet patriotism harmoniously combines the national traditions of the peoples and the common vital interests of all the working people of the Soviet Union. Far from dividing them, Soviet patriotism welds all the nations and peoples of our country into a single fraternal family. This should be regarded as the basis of the inviolable friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union which is growing ever stronger.

At the same time the peoples of the U.S.S.R. respect the rights and independence of the peoples of foreign countries and have always shown themselves willing to live in peace and friendship with neighbouring states. This should be regarded as the basis of the contacts growing and gaining strength between our State and the freedom-loving peoples.

The reason Soviet men and women hate the German invaders is not because they are people of different nationality, but because they have brought immeasurable calamity and suffering on our people

and on all freedom-loving peoples. It is an old saying of our people: "The wolf is not beaten because he is grey, but because he ate the sheep."

The German fascists chose the misanthropic race theory for their ideological weapon, in the expectation that by preaching bestial nationalism they would create the moral and political conditions for the German invaders over the enslaved peoples. Actually, however, the policy of racial hatred pursued by the Hitlerites has proved a source of internal weakness and international isolation for the German fascist State.

The ideology and policy of racial hatred have been a factor in the disintegration of the Hitlerite bandit bloc. It cannot be considered an accident that not only the subjugated peoples of France, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands have risen against the German imperialists, but also Hitler's former vassals—the Italians, Rumanians, Finns and Bulgarians. By their savage policy, the Hitler clique have set all the peoples of the world against Germany; and the so-called "chosen German race" has become the object of universal hatred.

In this war the Hitlerites have sustained not only a military defeat, but also a moral and political defeat. The ideology of equality of all races and nations, which has taken firm root in our country, the ideology of friendship among the peoples has emerged completely victorious over the Hitlerite ideology of bestial nationalism and racial hatred.

To-day, when the Patriotic War is drawing to its victorious conclusion, the historic role of the Soviet people is revealed in its full greatness. It is universally acknowledged now that by their selfless struggle the Soviet people have saved the civilisation of Europe from the fascist vandals. This is the great service rendered by the Soviet people to the history of mankind.

### 3. THE CONSOLIDATION AND EXTENSION OF THE FRONT OF THE ANTI-GERMAN COALITION

#### *The Question of Peace and Security*

The past year has been a year of triumph of the common cause of the anti-German coalition for the sake of which the peoples of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America have united in a fighting alliance.

It has been a year of consolidation of the unity of the three main Powers and of co-ordination of their actions against Hitlerite Germany.

The decision of the Teheran Conference on joint actions against Germany and the brilliant realisation of that decision are one of the

striking indications of the consolidation of the front of the anti-Hitler Coalition. There are few instances in history of plans for large-scale military operations undertaken in joint actions against a common enemy being carried out so fully and with such precision as the plan for a joint blow against Germany drawn up at the Teheran Conference.

There can be no doubt that without the unity of views and co-ordination of actions of the three Great Powers, the Teheran decision could not have been realised so fully and with such precision. Nor on the other hand can there be any doubt that the successful realisation of the Teheran decision was bound to serve to consolidate the front of the United Nations.

An equally striking indication of the solidarity of the front of the United Nations is to be seen in the decisions of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference on post-war security.

There is talk of differences between the three Powers on certain security problems. Differences do exist, of course, and they will arise on a number of other issues as well. Differences of opinion occur even among people in one and the same Party. They are all the more bound to occur between representatives of different States and different Parties. The surprising thing is not that differences exist, but that they are so few, and that as a rule in practically every case they are resolved in a spirit of unity and co-ordination among the three Great Powers. What matters is not that there are differences, but that these differences do not transgress the bounds of what the interests of the three Great Powers allow, and that, in the long run, they are resolved in accordance with the interests of that unity.

It is known that more serious differences existed between us over the opening of the Second Front. But it is also known that in the end these differences were resolved in a spirit of complete accord. The same thing may be said of the differences at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. What is characteristic of this Conference is not that certain differences were revealed there, but that nine-tenths of the security problems were solved at this Conference in a spirit of complete unanimity. That is why I think that the decisions of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference are to be regarded as a striking indication of the solidarity of the front of the anti-German Coalition.

As a still more striking indication of the consolidation of the front of the United Nations we must view the recent talks in Moscow with Mr. Churchill, the head of the British Government, and Mr. Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, held in an atmosphere of friendship and a spirit of complete unanimity.

Throughout the war the Hitlerites have made frantic efforts to cause disunity among the United Nations and set them at loggerheads, to stir up suspicion and unfriendly feeling among them, to weaken their

war effort by mutual distrust, and, if possible, by conflict between them as well.

These ambitions of the Hitlerite politicians are easy enough to understand. For them there is no greater danger than the unity of the United Nations in the struggle against Hitlerite imperialism, and for them there would have been no greater military and political success than the splitting of the Allied Powers in their struggle against the common enemy.

It is known, however, how futile the efforts of the Fascist politicians to disrupt the alliance of the Great Powers have proved. That means that the Alliance between the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the United States of America is founded not on casual, transitory considerations, but on vital and lasting interests. There can be no doubt that, having stood the strain of more than three years of war and being sealed with the blood of the nations risen in defence of their liberty and honour, the fighting alliance of the democratic powers will all the more certainly stand the strain of the concluding phase of the war.

The past year, however, has been not only a year of consolidation of the anti-German front of the Allied Powers, but also a year of its extension. It cannot be considered an accident that, after Italy, other allies of Germany—Finland, Rumania and Bulgaria—were also put out of the war. It should be noted that these States not only got out of the war but broke with Germany and declared war on her, thus joining the front of the United Nations. This signifies, undoubtedly, an extension of the front of the United Nations against Hitlerite Germany. Without doubt Germany's last ally in Europe, Hungary, will also be put out of action in the nearest future. This will mean the complete isolation of Hitlerite Germany in Europe and the inevitability of her collapse.

The United Nations face the victorious conclusion of the war against Hitlerite Germany. The war against Germany will be won by the United Nations—of that there can no longer be any doubt to-day.

To win the war against Germany is to accomplish a great, historic task. But to win the war does not in itself mean to ensure for the peoples a lasting peace and guaranteed security in the future. The task is not only to win the war but also to make new aggression and a new war impossible—if not for ever, then at least for a long time to come. After her defeat Germany will, of course, be disarmed, both in the economic and in the military-political sense.

It would however, be naive to think that she will not attempt to restore her might and launch new aggression. It is common knowledge that the German chieftains are already now preparing for a new war. History shows that a short period—some

20 or 30 years—is enough for Germany to recover from defeat and re-establish her might.

What means are there to preclude fresh aggression on Germany's part, and if war should start nevertheless, to nip it in the bud and give it no opportunity to develop into a big war?

This question is the more appropriate since history shows that aggressive nations, the nations which attack, are usually better prepared for a new war than peace-loving nations which, having no interest in a new war, are usually behindhand with their preparations for it. It is a fact that in the present war the aggressive nations had an invasion army all ready even before the war broke out, while the peace-loving nations did not have even a fully adequate army to cover their mobilisation.

One cannot regard as an accident such distasteful facts as the Pearl Harbour incident, the loss of the Philippines and other Pacific Islands, the loss of Hong-Kong and Singapore, when Japan, as the aggressive nation, proved to be better prepared for war than Great Britain and the United States of America, which pursued a policy of peace. Nor can one regard as an accident such a distasteful fact as the loss of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic area in the very first year of the war, when Germany, as the aggressive nation, proved better prepared for war than the peace-loving Soviet Union.

It would be naive to explain these facts by the personal qualities of the Japanese and the Germans, their superiority over the British, the Americans and the Russians, their foresight, etc. The reason here is not personal qualities but the fact that aggressive nations, interested in a new war, being nations that prepare for war over a long time and accumulate forces for it, usually are, and are bound to be, better prepared for war than peace-loving nations which have no interest in a new war.

This is natural and understandable. It is, if you like, a law of history, which it would be dangerous to ignore.

Accordingly it is not to be denied that in the future the peace-loving nations may once more find themselves caught off their guard by aggression unless, of course, they work out special measures right now which can avert it.

Well, what means are there to preclude fresh aggression on Germany's part and, if war should start nevertheless, to stifle it at its very beginning and give it no opportunities to develop into a big war?

There is only one means to this end, apart from the complete disarmament of the aggressive nations: This is to establish a special organisation made up of representatives of the peace-loving nations for the defence of peace and safeguarding of security; to put at the disposal of the directing body of this organisation the necessary minimum of armed forces required to avert aggression, and to oblige

this organisation to employ these armed forces without delay if it becomes necessary, to avert or stop aggression, and to punish those guilty of aggression.

This must not be a repetition of the dismal memory of the League of Nations, which had neither the rights nor the means for averting aggression. It will be a new, special, fully authorised international organisation having at its command everything necessary to defend peace and avert new aggression.

Can we expect the actions of this world organisation to be sufficiently effective? They will be effective if the great Powers which have borne on their shoulders the main burden of the war against Hitler-Germany continue to act in a spirit of unanimity and accord. They will not be effective if this essential condition is violated.

Comrades! The Soviet people and the Red Army are successfully executing the tasks which have confronted them in the course of the Patriotic War. The Red Army has worthily fulfilled its patriotic duty and liberated our Motherland from the enemy. Henceforth and for ever our soil is free of the Hitlerite pollution. Now remains its last, final mission: To complete, together with the armies of our Allies, the defeat of the German fascist Army, to finish off the fascist beast in its own den, and to hoist the flag of victory over Berlin.

There is reason to expect that this task will be fulfilled by the Red Army in the none too distant future.

Long live our victorious Red Army!  
Long live our glorious Navy!  
Long live the mighty Soviet people!  
Long live our great Motherland!  
Death to the German fascist invaders!